

# DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXIV, No. 8

MAY, 1953

50c Per Copy



The cast of *DEAR RUTH*, composed of Lynbrook High School seniors, Long Island, New York, looks over stage directions. Thespian troupe 724, Margaret B. Hecker, Troupe Sponsor.

## MIME

By Elizabeth Buckmaster

## GIRLS CAN BE BOYS

By Sister M. Mercia, O.S.F.

## PUPPETRY TODAY

By William Ireland Duncan

## DRAMATICS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

By June Mitchell

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(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespian Society, an organization of teachers and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools)

MEMBER OF THE EDUCATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Address: Dramatics, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio

\$2.50 Per Year

Volume XXIV, No. 8

50c Per Copy

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One year subscription—U.S.A.	\$2.50
One year subscription—Foreign	3.00
Canada and Newfoundland	2.75
Single copy	.50
Back issues, per copy	.50

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DRAMATICS is published monthly (eight times during the school year at College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, by The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio. Date of publication: Oct. 1, Nov. 1, Dec. 1, Jan. 1, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, April 1, and May 1. Blandford Jennings, National Director; Doris Marshall, Assistant National Director; Leon C. Miller, Secretary and Treasurer; Jean E. Donahey, Senior Councilor; Barbara Wellington, Senior Councilor.

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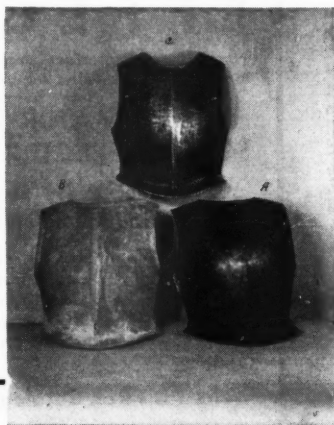
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(DRAMATICS is not published during the months of June, July, August and September. Next issue: October, 1953)

## As I See It . . .

### AS THE CURTAIN CLOSES

And so we draw the curtain on another year's work! In retrospect we take pride in our growth as an organization. By June 30 we shall issue Charter No. 1300. The circulation of *DRAMATICS* increased 4000 copies a month over that of last year, making a grand total of 32,000 additional copies. We can now guarantee for the first time in our history an average 21,000 monthly circulation to our advertisers. Our total membership both active and alumni now exceeds 200,000. From 71 chartered troupes in 1929 to 1300 plus active troupes in 24 years is an enviable record. We can all be proud of our progress.

But what has made our society great? Honor and Service. It is an honor to be called a Thespian—anything less than that we cannot accept. Membership is granted only to him who *earns* the right to be called a Thespian. Our society is not social nor is it secretive. It is the outstanding honor society in the field of the Dramatic Arts in the secondary schools wherever they may be.

Service—service to our Sponsors, our student Thespians; service to all secondary schools, whether members or not; service to colleges and universities, to Community and Little Theatres; service to the professional theatre. We realize that we are but a part of the whole—and we will do our part to keep Theatre in this country as one of the Fine Arts. In all of the tomorrows the National Thespian Society will always be synonymous with Honor and Service. To that we are dedicated as a member of the National Council, a Troupe Sponsor, a Thespian.

"Act well your part; there all honor lies."

### AS THE CURTAIN OPENS

As we look forward to next year we face the future with some trepidation. Coming up is the biggest show of our existence—the celebration of our *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary*. Plans are, however, in the making. We hope to schedule a number of regional and state conferences; we shall ask for each troupe to hold one celebration, whether it be a full-length play, an assembly program, a radio broadcast or a telecast in commemoration of our 25 years of service. We shall climax the year's celebration with our Silver Anniversary Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University in June, 1954, which by the way we shall make the "greatest show on earth" for all high schools.

*DRAMATICS* too will play its part in this celebration. Further revisions are now being planned to give it more "reader" appeal than ever before. Our three series for next year will be *Youth Drama in Europe*, written by Gerald Tyler of Brighouse, England; *I Choose Dramatics* by Doris Marshall, Sponsor of Troupe 745, Helena, Montana; and *Arena Theatre* by Ted Skinner, Chairman, Department of Speech, Texas College of Arts and Industry, Kingsville, Texas. More pictures than ever before will be used and more attractive lay-outs are in the offing. *DRAMATICS* will head all celebrations throughout the year.

IT WILL BE A GRAND YEAR FOR CELEBRATING.

### ORCHIDS TO OUR ADVERTISERS

Our attractive, colorful advertisements in all eight issues this past year have helped to make your magazine most attractive. In the advertising pages of *DRAMATICS* you will find practically the answers to all problems of the amateur theatre whether it be an arc spot, costumes, sound effects, plays, accessories, or theatrical make-up. And the colleges and universities with outstanding theatre departments are using our pages in which to tell their stories. All of our advertisers are reputable concerns and deserve your patronage. Before you buy, check the pages of your own magazine. You cannot go wrong if it is advertised in *DRAMATICS*.

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# In This Issue

**BOYS** create no problems for Sister M. Mercia, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 134, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois, for her school is not coeducational. This situation does not dampen the enthusiasm of her school for the dramatic arts as she has her girls play the male roles. She tells us this month how well it can be done in her article, *Girls Can Be Boys*. I wish I could have seen her production of *Double Door*.

**PUPPETRY** today is no longer just an entertainment hobby; it is becoming big business. William Ireland Duncan, Head of the Department of Theatre at Western College, Oxford, Ohio, Producer of the famous Tatterman Marionettes and Executive Secretary of the *Puppeteers of America*, will open your eyes in his article, *Puppetry Today*, in which he explains clearly the role marionettes are playing in advertising.

**DO** you know the difference between mime and pantomime? Do you insist upon your play casts rehearsing first in mime before using lines and suggested gestures? I suggest you read carefully the article, *Mime*, by Elizabeth Buckmaster, Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois, before you start rehearsing that next play. You will be amazed how much it will help.

**ORCHIDS** to June Mitchell of Emerson College, Boston, for her series of eight articles on the subject, *Theatre after Graduation*. She concludes the series with *Dramatics in Everyday Life* this month. I know that all our sponsors will be delighted to know that this series will be reprinted in pamphlet form this summer and that they will receive a complimentary copy next fall. This pamphlet will become a guidance bible for all those who wish to continue in theatre after graduation.

**ELSIE BALL**, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 21, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Ind., concludes our series, *Working Together*, with her article, *Drama and the Community*. She stresses the value of Play Festivals, exchange of play tickets among neighboring high schools and attendance at college productions. She firmly believes that drama is an excellent medium to better public relations. To Barbara Wellington, Fall River, Mass., thanks again for editing this entire series.

**TO ALL OUR** department editors, Paul Myers, New York City; Si Mills, Tucson, Ariz.; Louise C. Horton, Detroit, Mich.; Earl Blank, Tahlequah, Okla.; and Talbot Pearson, Boston, Mass., your editor wishes to express his personal appreciation for jobs well done. The remarkable growth of *DRAMATICS* during the last several years is in part due to the excellency of their contributions.

**OUR** last play of the month, selected by Dr. Blank, is an original play, *Consider the Heavens*, by M. David Samples, which had its premiere at the Morehead State College, Kentucky, under the direction of W. P. Covington, III, head of the department. Mr. Samples is connected with the McHenry County Theatre Guild of Illinois.

**FREDERICK THON**, Associate Professor, Drama, Bryn Mawr, Pa., College authored an interesting article, *Considerations before Producing Shakespeare*; our Thespians are still chattering; our Scoreboard shows our progress so far this year; and *A Dream Comes True* is about our new Headquarters.

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"First for Glen Cove, A" .....	Mar. 8	"Dramatics on the Side" .....	Jan. 12
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Fourth Dramatic Arts Conference, Pictures of "Girls Can Be Boys" .....	Oct. 10	"Me, a Teacher?" .....	Dec. 10
Gobel, Max: "Drama and Physical Education" ..	Apr. 12	"Theatre on the Air" .....	Apr. 10
Gordon, Kurt: "My Fingers on Your Pulse" ..	Dec. 9	"Your Own Little Theatre?" .....	Oct. 14
<i>Green Valley</i> , Staging .....	Jan. 18	"Theatre on Broadway" Oct. 20, Nov. 11, Dec. 15, Jan. 14, Feb. 18, Mar. 19, Apr. 18, May 14	
Hallock, Margaretta: "Music and Drama" .....	Dec. 11	"Theatre on the Air" .....	Apr. 10
Halstead, William P.: "To Thespian Sponsors -Greetings" .....	Oct. 7	"Thespian Chatter" Oct. 30, Dec. 22, Jan. 22, Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 22, May 20	
<i>Harvey</i> , Staging .....	Nov. 12	Thespian Scoreboard .....	May 13
Havener, Donlon F.: "South of the Rio Grande" .....	Mar. 7	Thon, Frederick: "Considerations before Pro- ducing Shakespeare" .....	May 22
Hayes, Joseph: "Writing for Television" .....	Apr. 9	<i>Time of Your Life, The</i> , Staging .....	Mar. 12
"High School Theatre, The" .....	Apr. 7	To Thespian Sponsors-Greetings .....	Oct. 7
"Home Economics and Drama" .....	Jan. 10	Turner, Daniel: "Home Economics and Drama" "Twas I U in '52" .....	Jan. 10
Horton, Louise C.: See Children's Theatre for Oct., Dec., Mar., Apr.		Tyler, Gerald: "Youth Drama in England" ..	Jan. 9
Hynds, Frances: "We Made a Movie" .....	Dec. 8	Updegraff, Mary: Staging <i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i> .....	Feb. 14
"It's Hard Work" .....	Nov. 9	"We Can't Give It Up!" .....	Dec. 12
Johnson, Mary Bunn: Staging <i>Green Valley</i> (with Karen Ekegren) .....	Jan. 18	"We Made a Movie" .....	Dec. 8
"Learning the Part" .....	Jan. 7	White, Stanley J.: "Don't Keep It a Secret" "We Raised \$2,000!" .....	Apr. 24
Mansur, Frank L.: "The High School Theatre" Marshall, Doris: "Art and Drama" .....	Apr. 7	Wellington, Barbara: ed.: "Working To- gether," q.v.	Oct. 12
McMahon, Luella: Staging <i>Room for One More</i> .....	Oct. 22	Willey, Wilbur: Staging <i>Old Doc</i> .....	Dec. 18
"Me, a Teacher?" .....	Dec. 10	"Working Together" .....	
Mercia, Sister M.: "Girls Can Be Boys" .....	May 8	"Allied Activities and Dramatics" .....	Oct. 16
Mills, Si: "Dialing Around," q.v.		"Art and Drama" .....	Feb. 10
"Mime" .....	May 9	"Drama and Physical Education" .....	Apr. 12
Mitchell, Emily: "We Raised \$2,000!" .....	Oct. 12	"Drama and the Community" .....	May 12
Mitchell, June: Theatre after Graduation, q.v.		"Electricity and Drama" .....	Mar. 11
Movie reviews, see Screen Reviews .....		"Foreign Languages and Drama" .....	Nov. 10
Murphy, Clarence R.: Staging <i>Harvey</i> .....	Nov. 12	"Home Economics and Drama" .....	Jan. 10
"Music and Drama" .....	Dec. 11	"Music and Drama" .....	Dec. 11
		"World for a Location, The" .....	Feb. 11
		"Writing for Television" .....	Apr. 9
		"Your Own Little Theatre?" .....	Oct. 14
		"Youth Drama in England" .....	Jan. 9
		Zitrone, Leon: "Comedie-Francaise" .....	Feb. 7

High schools, large and  
small, have enjoyed unusual  
success with the production  
of . . .

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your gun**

colorful, exciting, entirely  
practical for any high school

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



# A DREAM

## COMES TRUE

**A** *DREAM Comes True*, a dream of our founders and of all Thespians — our own new national headquarters, opened and dedicated on December 30, 1952. Your society now owns a brand new building bought and paid for without any solicitations, gifts, mortgages. By the foresight of the late Ernest Bavely, your first national Secretary-Treasurer, our present Board of Trustees, the past and present members of the National Council, the realization of this dream was made possible.

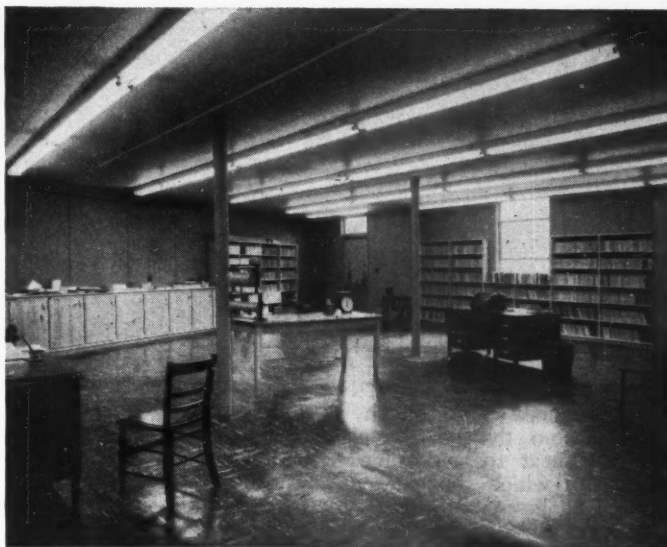
Your new headquarters is situated on an irregularly sized lot 60 feet wide and 85 feet deep. The building itself is 60 feet wide at the street line, 40 feet deep and 40 feet wide at its rear. Its working area is approximately 2,200 square feet.

Against the front wall are the bookcases on which are arranged by publishers the books and playbooks in our lending library. Looking toward the rear of the building one sees the cabinets along the right wall. Desks, additional bookcases, our new addressing machine and metal storage cabinet for our stencils are in the rear. On the rear left wall is the door which leads into the heating room in which is located a combination Carrier automatic gas heating and air conditioning unit. Coming forward one finds the inset in which is the mimeographing machine and sink. Additional desks, filing cabinets and the entrance to the private office of your secretary-treasurer complete our jaunt around the room.

The walls are painted in light brown, the bookcases and cabinets stained and polished in their natural wood. The acoustical ceiling is in white. The walls of the private office are of corded plywood in its natural color. The entire floor space is covered with brown and white asphalt tile.

The exterior front is Roman brick with its two black doors. There are two large windows and two glass transoms in the street wall. The other three exterior walls are constructed of cement blocks.

You can be proud of your new headquarters. It is a showplace in College Hill. *It's a dream come true!*



Beauty and working space were the essentials in planning your new headquarters. Pictured above is an interior view of the front of the building.



Another interior scene of your new headquarters as you look toward the rear of the building.



The new National Headquarters of the National Thespian Society located at 1610 Marlowe Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

# GIRLS CAN BE BOYS

By SISTER M. MERCIA, O. S. F.

ONCE UPON a long ago the theatre was a man's world; man trod the boards untrammelled by woman's presence. But though she was banned from the boards, playwrights found it next to impossible to write dramas in which she was entirely excluded; Shakespeare couldn't do it and if the great William failed, how could a lesser light hope to succeed? At any rate, plays continued to admit that there were two sexes even though convention demanded that the "lesser man" be impersonated.

Well, that situation changed some time ago, but ironically enough some of us who dabble in amateur dramatics find ourselves reverting to the old order, with this new touch however,—the stage now belongs to the woman, or let us be more precise and say it belongs to the girls. This position is not maintained as a sort of belated vengeance for the unfair distribution of dramatic labor in a long ago yesterday. The answer is far simpler: We don't happen to be coeducational.

The dramatics teacher in an all-girls' school can of course send out an S.O.S. to the nearest boys' or co-ed school, or she can content herself with the "all female" plays, always available; or she can throw caution to the winds and turn her girls into "men." The last is what

we do. We've written off the three-act play with all girl casts because most of them we've seen haven't been top-notch dramatically. As to calling in the gentlemen from other schools, we once thought about doing that, not very seriously though, and not at all after that first thought. Not that we have anything against the brawny, crew-cut stalwarts, but we figure things this way: the young Thespians would be "guest artists"; come Sunday afternoon there would be the lure of tennis or golf, or basketball, and if given the ultimatum, "Either make the rehearsals or get out of the cast," they might choose to walk out. After all, it isn't *their* play!

At this point I ought to be fair and reiterate that we haven't actually learned this from experience. It's quite likely that the young men would come around

for our rehearsals with the same alacrity that they come around for our dances, but the possibility remains. And we have found from experience that our girls do make handsome, convincing men even though they can't reproduce the bass rumble that comes from their masculine contemporaries.

We don't spend too much time bemoaning that fact, however. We concentrate rather on the other masculine traits that can be acquired—the full stride, for instance, the masculine "at ease" posture in sitting and standing. The modern girl is so thoroughly at home in jeans that she doesn't feel out of place in a dress suit any more. Of course there is a process of indoctrination that goes along with the dress suit. We usually get the girls into masculine form by concentrating first of all on their posture. Then we try to get across the idea of "thinking" like a man. It all boils down to getting into character of course, but in this case it's a matter of getting the feminine into the masculine character.

It's surprising how quickly the girls can do it though. And sometimes those who are the most thoroughly feminine in a formal turn out to be the best masculine bets when it comes to play casting.

We don't determine our roles beforehand. We have democratic tryouts for the Senior play, the dramatic event of the year, and anyone can try out for any role. However, by the time senior year rolls around, we know pretty well whether the class can carry a predominantly masculine play like *The Ivory Door*, for instance; whether they can meet the dramatic challenge of a *Death Takes a Holiday*, a *Berkeley Square*, a *Double Door*. We've presented all these plays within the past several years.

To repeat, by the time a class has

(Continued on page 31)



A tense scene from *Double Door*, as presented by St. Francis Academy, Thespian Troupe 134, Joliet, Ill., in which the girls are boys. Sister Mercia, O.S.F., Thespian Sponsor, directed this production.



Another stirring scene from St. Francis Academy's production of *Double Door*.



# MIME

By ELIZABETH BUCKMASTER

WE SAW THE Duse's hands, palms turned away from the world and us, only the backs of the long, straight fingers — like bare boughs — vouchsafed us and the fingers always falling toward the earth in a sign of renunciation and there was the Terry ... hands held out as always in a gesture both begging and bequeathing, the palms open upward and the fingers curled a little as though feeling forever for something there," Velona Pilcher on Dame Ellen Terry (in Theatre Arts Anthology).

Eleonora Duse's hands and her equally sensitive face are almost all that we read of in detail about that great artist of the theatre. Ellen Terry's charm and her speaking hands which echoed the warmth and life of her voice remind us in the theatre of the neglect of our bodies as dynamic vehicles of conveyance.

What the actor does, the use he makes of his body, particularly of his face and hands, are of prime concern not only to him but to the director. The latter may be concerned at the onset of a production with larger matters, such as the best management of the playing area, but he was probably quite sharply motivated by his actors' pantomimic flexibility when he cast his players.

Once a play's action has been blocked, the focus is not only on line memorization but also on gesture, both as a means of character revelation and as line implementation. However, if gesture is standardized and externally applied like a coat of grease paint, it does the actor great disservice and merely calls attention to itself. The actor's personal mannerisms of gesture and expression are equally reprehensible, for they are not those of his role.

It has come to be recognized that naturalness of speech is *not* the goal of the actor, that he must *seem* to speak naturally while *actually* paying strict attention to articulation and tone, and voice placement so that the proverbial deaf old lady in the back row of the auditorium can hear with ease. Stage speech therefore is artistic or artificial speech which sounds natural to the audience, not to the actors.

The same truth applies to the actor's

(Continued on page 30)



Thespian Troupe 260, Big Creek High School, War, W. Va., Helen Kantor, Sponsor



Thespians of Troupe 808, Augusta Tilghman High School, Paducah, Ky., Mrs. Henry A. Richeson, Sponsor, won First Place in the Kentucky Drama Festival with their presentation of *Sunday's Child*.



Years Ago, York Community High School (Troupe 94), Elmhurst, Ill., Doris White, Sponsor.

# PUPPETRY TODAY

By WILLIAM IRELAND DUNCAN

**N**O LONGER does a booking agent, calling on a prospective sponsor, feel that he must carry a puppet in his hand and demonstrate its operation so that the prospect will know what he is talking about! In the past few years the growth of puppetry has been widespread and certainly television has made puppets familiar to young and old alike. But this doesn't mean that puppets are new—that they are a recent invention for the television screen. On the contrary, the art of puppetry is an old and honorable one—just how ancient we cannot be sure, but certainly some thousands of years.

Puppets are probably best known through their popularity in entertainment, but this is only one of many fields in which they are used today. Teachers use them in the classroom, recreation leaders use them with their groups, therapists find them valuable aids in working with patients, librarians use them in their work and in advertising puppets demonstrate and sell products of all kinds.

Before mentioning some of the opportunities in puppetry, it may be well to answer a question which is often asked: "What is the difference between marionettes and puppets?" The term "puppets" is a general one and applies to all types of puppets, including marionettes. Marionettes are the kind of puppets which are operated on strings and manipulated from above. Other kinds of puppets include hand puppets, hand-and-rod puppets, shadow figures, rod puppets and finger puppets—none of

these having the strings controlling them from above that the marionette has.

One of the most interesting uses of puppets is in the field of advertising. I should like to quote from an article written some years ago by Edward Mabley, the co-founder (with me) of the Tatterman Marionettes, which, in addition to their regular programs for entertainment, were pioneers in the commercial field. Although written in 1936 when the Tatterman Marionettes, now thirty years old, were in their thirteenth season, what Mr. Mabley had to say then is surprisingly pertinent today. In his article Mr. Mabley told of the great success of such Tatterman Marionette advertising projects as that of the famous Jantzen trade mark diving girl, translated into a twelve-inch marionette whose exhibitions of diving and swimming in a pool of real water (usually in department store windows) caused traffic jams throughout the country. He told of a six-week toy promotion, a

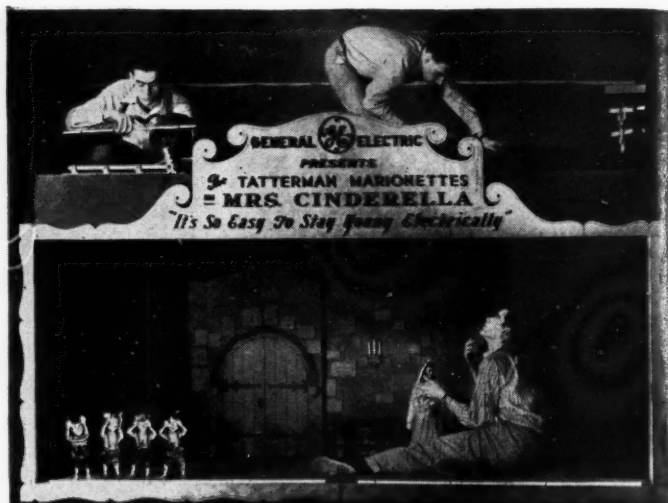
marionette revue in one of the largest department stores in the Midwest (Famous-Barr in St. Louis) to which a 25 cent admission was charged, and which attracted 56,437 adults and 58,853 children. He mentioned the dramatization of a food slogan by a chain of food stores in Cleveland (Fisher Brothers Company) at the 1935 Cleveland Exposition.

Mr. Mabley in his article spoke of "the spectacular rise of the marionette as an advertising medium." He wrote, "One must look beyond the novelty of the medium, I am sure, to find the real reason for such amazing success. It lies in the dramatized sales approach and the ability of the marionette to tell a selling story entertainingly."

Mr. Mabley—now a Broadway playwright and writer for network radio and television, and the author of Tatterman Marionette productions both in entertainment and in the field of advertising—felt as long ago as 1936 that marionettes in advertising were not just a fad—and he was right. Marionettes (and other kinds of puppets too of course) are used extensively in promoting the sale of many products, in telling sales stories of various types—sometimes in actual sales training for employees and in the last few years in selling through the medium of television.

It is interesting to note that the merits of puppets in advertising as pointed out by Mr. Mabley have remained true right up to the present day and what he wrote is certainly applicable to puppets in television too. To quote him further: "In accord with basic merchandising principles, the marionette offers many practical advantages to the advertiser. Above everything else of course it is entertaining. An interesting and disarming approach wins more than half the battle against sales resistance. Secondly, a marionette show need not be

(Continued on page 29)



Revolving stage set-up for the Tatterman Marionette musical production staged for General Electric at the New York World's Fair and in department stores throughout the country on a 14-month tour.



Vivian Michael, Columbus Ohio, high school art teacher, with some of the hand puppets presented on television by her and Peg Bickel of the Ohio State University faculty.

## DRAMATICS in EVERYDAY LIFE

By JUNE MITCHELL



Harvey, Troupe 444, Filer, Idaho, High School, Helen Smith, Sponsor.

**T**HIS IS THE last article of our series, and like any school teacher I am loath to leave our discussion on *Theatre after Graduation* without a sort of general review. To you high school drama people who have worked so hard these last years to make your school plays a success, the talent you have developed and the experience you have received can open up many channels in the future.

Whatever your plans may be, I hope you can go to college. You will remember that whatever phase of your future we were discussing, I recommended four years at a liberal arts college with good academic standing. Once you have your A.B. degree in your hand, you are that much better prepared to meet any competition that comes along. Not that the A.B. guarantees a job (would that it did!) but it is a necessary requirement for most positions and a deciding factor in obtaining many more. And if your A.B. is combined with specialized training in theatre, then you are much better prepared to "go get yourself a job" than is the general liberal arts college man with no specialty. If it's possible, spend your next four years in college dramatics. Learn all about the theatre—make-up, costuming, lighting, scenery, playwriting. You'll have a wonderful four years, come what may.

Then what? Then if you continue in the theatre, you choose among three fields—professional, amateur and teaching.

In discussing professional theatre I have deliberately tried to be as discouraging as possible. Forget the glamor; remember the hard work; and realize that the odds are a thousand-to-one against you. If you take a chance anyway and go to New York, be realistic. Don't go without money enough to live on for some time, and also be prepared to support yourself with another type of job while you wait for "a break."

Radio and television are not much more hopeful. Although there is always

the chance of getting experience on the local broadcasting station, you're still aiming for New York City. All you've ever read about New York City's breaking hearts is true.

I have not discussed openings in Hollywood, but if you are dreaming of leaving for the Pacific Coast and film stardom, take a look at your neighborhood theatre. If it hasn't already closed down, it's living precariously on its popcorn concession. The moving picture industry is going through a terrific crisis, and until it decides how to get along with television, even the established stars don't know on what to count.

In any of the professional fields—legitimate theatre, motion pictures, radio, television—only a rare combination of talent and luck will catapult a few fortunate souls to stardom. But on the other hand, tomorrow's stars are going to high school *somewhere* today, and one of them just may be you. So send me a pass to your first smash hit—if you don't starve to death first!

Thus since the professional theatre has few openings, unquestionably many of you high school Thespians will find your future theatre in the amateur field. Don't be ashamed of the word "amateur." It can stand for some of the finest, most artistic theatre work in the country—or it can mean the worst bungling of "local talent." You alone set your own standards.

If your community has a flourishing Little Theatre, then there you are. Attach yourself to it. Some of these community theatres are thriving business enterprises. You may even find it supporting you—although that happy prospect is unlikely. In any case it will offer you stimulating opportunity for theatre work.

If your town has no community theatre, I hope you will heed my advice to get other graduates of your high school drama club together and try your own hand at producing plays. This process can be quite a struggle, and you will have to learn by experience as you cut your theatrical teeth on the local situation—but more power to you. Get your high school director to advise you and go to it.

If individually you are not quite so ambitious, you can always "put on" an occasional play with the members of some local organization such as your church. This type of production, I repeat, is in a class by itself, but if you live through it, it can be lots of fun. If you're good, they may even pay you.

(Continued on page 28)



Operation Romance, Troupe 258, Ensley High School, Birmingham, Ala., Florence Pass, Sponsor.



# DRAMA and the COMMUNITY

By ELSIE BALL

**T**HE MOTTO each individual hears when initiated into the National Thespian Society is: "Act well your part; there all the honor lies." If this motto were applied to all the activities of the entire drama organization, it might read, "Do *all* your projects well and honor and opportunities for further growth will come to the organization from the school and from the community." Enthusiastic, polished, well-planned dramatic programs can be of utmost value to any school or community. Good productions attract talent into the dramatic group; good talent means worthwhile productions; worthwhile productions mean an interested community.

standing actors and actresses; excellent and superior ratings to the participating schools.

Not only did the students and coaches of these various schools have two most profitable and enjoyable days, but principals, administrators and other school officials were made more cognizant of the drama and its power. One official was heard to say, "It is good for schools to get together on some basis other than athletics." One dramatic coach reported that his principal was enthusiastic about drama work for the first time and that he was now interested in establishing a chapter of National Thespians in his own school. *What better way could be utilized to awaken school administrators*

sor drama and speech festivals: one in the southern part of the state and one in the northern part. These festivals offer the same valuable experiences as the city festivals plus the added attraction of better equipment (as a rule), the thrill of meeting on a college campus and seeing a play produced by college students.

The climax of all festivals is the national Dramatic Arts Conference sponsored by The National Thespian Society and held biennially. In June, 1954, the fifth conference is again scheduled at Indiana University, which will climax the celebration of this society's 25th birthday. Community projects to earn money to send students long distances, enthusiasm of students who have attended other conferences, the leadership that comes from such an experience, the valuable exchange of ideas from people from all over the nation, the storehouse of inspiration, the challenge to do superior work and the friendships that are made — all speak for the potent value of the national festival.



Initiation Ceremony, Troupe 140, Nuttall High School, Lookout, W. Va., Florence Croft, Sponsor.

Horizons may be broadened, students may be inspired and relationships between different schools in the community may be strengthened through city, state and national drama festivals. The drama may act as a common bond to knit several schools together in closer fellowship, understanding and respect.

For the past three years the Indianapolis schools have sponsored a Greater Indianapolis Drama Festival — including both city and county schools. Last year eight high schools enjoyed two days of one-act plays presented by the various schools of the city and county; displays of make up; electrical equipment and stage models; lectures by outstanding people in the field of drama; critiques by competent judges; delicious banquet attended by school officials as well as the drama groups of the various schools; initiation of a new troupe into the National Thespian Society; an informal tea for getting acquainted; and a three-act play by the host school. Awards of certificates and gifts were given to out-

*to the realization of the splendid work that is being done in our high schools in the dramatic arts than to let them observe the gracious poise of students as they receive awards for work well done and to witness a three-act play that is so well done that any traveling troupe may have been glad to have produced it?*

Not only were school officials made aware of the festival, but through carefully laid plans, the community was reached through radio announcements, a short skit on television and newspaper stories. Yes, such festivals take "blood, sweat, and tears" for a year in order to lay careful plans; but they pay big dividends, for they offer a challenge to every student to do his best; they act as a clinic for coaches and students; they afford an opportunity to make new and lasting friends — all of which bring about friendly understanding between schools.

In addition to this city festival we have two colleges in the state that spon-

Another plan that helps to create a better feeling among different schools in the community is that of sending advance notice of play productions to surrounding schools with an offer to reserve a block of seats at a special rate. We have had schools come 60 to 70 miles to see a production. The students love to exchange ideas and meet people who are cast in the same parts they have played. It offers a challenge to both the guest school and the local school to do their best. The exchange of spots, properties, sound effects, costumes that are difficult to find can be a help to the schools. Whether or not it is the same play, we learn something from every production and such trips bring about a good fellowship between local groups as well as between the groups of different schools. Most colleges offer a similar plan to the schools in their surrounding communities.

Three colleges in a radius of five to 50 miles have issued invitations to our group to see their productions as guests

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or at reduced rates. Our own school program is so full that we cannot always take advantage of the opportunity. A trip to the Purdue campus to see the production of *Macbeth* was most profitable for everyone who went. Those interested in costumes consulted the head of costume committee; those interested in staging had a tour of the stage and the theater to learn the techniques used to get effects. Personal contact with the actors and actresses convinced our group that we must do a Shakespearian play. What better impetus could a coach of dramatics have for the production of worthwhile plays?

Another project that our group had enjoyed a great deal is inviting other schools to attend our regular monthly meetings. Often we ask our guests to participate in the program. In this way we have a real challenge to do our best as well as an opportunity to practice simple social graces. One troupe in our community always sends an invitation to surrounding Thespian troupes to attend its spring initiation.

In our school we have a formal banquet each spring at which time we initiate new members. At this banquet we have as our guests all the teachers who have helped us in any way with productions, school officials and administrators, and interested people in the community.

Drama is also a medium to better public relations. Theatre offers opportunities for the folks of the community to participate. There is no more forceful way to project an idea than through the drama; therefore the drama lends itself to community projects, such as P.T.A. membership drives, Community Chest fund, March of Dimes, Founders' Day programs, or church building programs. These organizations give support to the high school productions, and the school has an opportunity to say, "thank you," when they reciprocate by helping them boost their own projects in the community.

In some communities in which there is a local radio station the drama classes assume the responsibility for a one hour daily show. What a fine opportunity to knit the interest of the community with that of the school!

In our dramatic group we have a contact committee whose business it is to receive requests for programs from organizations in the community and to keep a list of one-act plays, skits, readings and talks of students who desire to render this service to the community. This committee is a busy one, for literary clubs, lodges, garden clubs, Gold

## THESPIAN SCOREBOARD

April 1, 1953

### New Troupes Added To Date Since July 1, 1952

Ohio	9
Texas	9
Illinois	5
New York	5
California	4
Idaho	3
Iowa	3
Colorado	3
Oregon	3
Maryland	3
Missouri	3
Indiana	2
Virginia	2
Oklahoma	2
Pennsylvania	2
West Virginia	2
Alabama	2
Florida	2
Utah	2
Massachusetts	2
Montana	2
Minnesota	1
Wisconsin	1
Michigan	1
Connecticut	1
Kansas	1
Nebraska	1
New Hampshire	1
Wyoming	1

Total 78

**1281**  
**THESPIAN**  
**TROUPES**  
**LOCATED**  
**IN**  
**48**  
**STATES**  
**AND**  
**IN**  
**CANADA**  
**PANAMA**  
**CANAL**  
**ZONE**  
**ALASKA**  
**HAWAII**  
**JAPAN**  
**DISTRICT**  
**OF**  
**COLUMBIA**  
**1281**

### States Having 10 or More Troupes

Ohio	129
Illinois	90
West Virginia	85
California	66
Iowa	61
Texas	55
Indiana	54
Pennsylvania	45
Michigan	44
Minnesota	43
New York	43
Idaho	38
Washington	37
Kansas	34
Florida	34
Oregon	31
Tennessee	26
Nebraska	25
Oklahoma	24
Colorado	24
Arkansas	22
Alabama	22
Wisconsin	19
Missouri	19
Virginia	19
New Jersey	17
Wyoming	15
South Dakota	14
Connecticut	14
Montana	13
Utah	13
Massachusetts	13
Louisiana	12
Arizona	10

Star Mothers and church organizations are always calling for our help with their programs. Theatre-in-the-Round lends itself nicely to this type of program which often has to be given without a stage and in close quarters.

Outstanding talented students of the high school group continue to serve the community after graduation, for they become members of civic groups and thus continue to work in the community. One of the greatest services students of drama of the high school render to the community is that upon graduation they become leaders in building programs in churches, P.T.A., fraternal organizations, book clubs and the YMCA or YWCA organizations. High school teachers give a real service to the community by offering constant suggestions and guidance to these people who so often look to them for help.

This kind of leadership was displayed this year when a Methodist church burned in our school community. Many of the youth of that church had been or were enrolled in some field of speech work at the high school and it was thrilling to see these young people take complete charge of an evening's entertainment (with little adult help) to make money for the rebuilding of their church. The originality shown in the various acts, the careful timing of the show and the care given to details made for a program that any teacher would

have been proud to have coached. Yes, these high school drama students do become leaders in the community.

In a community where there is no civic theatre for the young people to join, the Thespians who have graduated often form an alumni group and thus continue their interest in theatre which they learned to love so well during their high school days.

Perhaps the greatest significance of high school drama is the intrinsic growth of the individual student. Certainly when there is growth both in character and personality, the drama is helping to build a better community and in turn a better nation. The study of great drama develops a more sympathetic understanding of all people, a broader outlook on life; interpretation of a part trains a keener sense of observation, a better control of emotions, a development of ingenuity, imagination and poise; group activity in drama work develops such desirable qualities as patience, sportsmanship, tact, dependability and promptness; technical training in participation in plays teaches better diction, posture and voice control.

If the approximately 75,000 full length plays presented each year by the secondary schools of the nation before 18,000,000 to 25,000,000 people were discontinued, certainly the loss of this form of cultural art would be calamitous not only to each community but to the nation at large.



# THEATRE on BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

IT SEEMS hardly possible that this is the final report of the Broadway season 1952-53. In prospect the theatre season seems to stretch ahead into almost limitless space—all of the many attractions are still unjudged, so many things are in preparation, new stars are still unborn and the final evaluations way off in the future. At the end of the season only the high points (and the very low) remain fresh in our recollections. The many average and mediocre offerings, the run-of-the-mill performances, the minor flurries and squabbles have faded away.

Let us first talk of the recent new productions and then get to the summing up. After a very hazardous prelude the New York City Theatre Company did get a season of drama under way at the City Center. Lincoln Kirstein has taken on the responsibilities of managing director of the municipal playhouse and under his leadership a wonderful program has been offered. This season, Albert Marre, whose work at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has elicited considerable enthusiasm, was asked to serve as director of the theatre company.

Activity got under way in February with a revival of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* of which I reported in last month's issue. The second attraction was Bernard Shaw's *Misalliance* and a highly successful production it was. I had been a fan of Mr. Shaw's comedy for many years—ever since I had played Gunner in a production of the work during my college training. With so many of the late dramatist's works being re-examined, I had wondered why no one had turned to *Misalliance*. It was good to see my enthusiasm for the play seconded by the success of the New York City Theatre Company production. So unanimous was the critical reception and so wholehearted the public support that after the scheduled run at the City Center the production was moved to the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. In this transferral a new precedent was set. Heretofore, when a successful show moved from the City Center for a regular Broadway run, one of the Broadway producers took the production under his wing. In the instance of *Misalliance*, the off-Times Square engagement is under the aegis of the New York City Theatre Com-



A delightful scene from Bernard Shaw's hilarious comedy, *Misalliance*, now playing at the Barrymore Theatre, New York City.

pany. There was some protest from the producers' organization . . . a charge of unfair competition was leveled since considerable concessions are made to the City Center—ostensibly a non-profit organization. At the end, however, differences were forgotten, complications untangled and the move was made.

Bernard Shaw's *Misalliance* is a study of the difficult relationship which exists between parent and child. The action of the play takes place during the course of one afternoon in Mr. Tarleton's home in Surrey, England. Mr. Tarleton, of Tarleton's underwear, is a well-made, self-made man. His wife thinks he is supreme. His children, Johnny and Hypatia, respect him but feel his ideas are old-fashioned and that they are not completely understood. There are several guests in the house—invited and unexpected. The two invited guests are Lord Summerhays, an Empire builder, and his son, Bentley—the latter engaged to Hypatia. There is a much warmer feeling between Bentley and Mr. Tarleton (and between Johnny and Lord Summerhays) than between father and son. This is so apparent that the Peer feels that things may be better if parents only tried to raise other people's children.

The uninvited company includes Joey Percival, a classmate of Bentley's, whose plane crashes into the Tarleton greenhouse; Miss Lina Szczepanowska, a member of a Polish family, which must risk the life of one of its members at least once a day; and Gunner, who hides in a portable Turkish bath until the opportunity to assassinate Mr. Tarleton presents itself. The comedy ends most happily but the conversation expended in unraveling the difficulties ranks with Shaw's best.

Under the direction of Cyril Ritchard, the production was a splendid one. Barry Jones, last seen on the local stage as Socrates in *Barefoot in Athens*, played

Mr. Tarleton. Dorothy Sands was delightful as his wife; Tamara Geva played Lina with authority; and Roddy McDowall, William Redfield, Jan Farrand enacted the children. *Misalliance* is one of the most enjoyable productions of the entire season.

For their final offering the New York City Theatre Company turned again to Shakespeare and to Albert Marre's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. This, as was the case with *Love's Labour's Lost*, had been previously exhibited at The Brattle Theatre. It was an adequate production of the play though it lacked fire and that special quality which makes a work memorable. Much of the success of *The Merchant* hinges upon the Shylock and the Portia. Luther Adler and Margaret Phillips understood the play but they seemed to be constricted in their execution of the roles. I suspect that they were too impressed with the scope of the part and with the play to feel relaxed in the portrayal. Mr. Adler's father Jacob was a famous Shylock of his day and the role must mean a great deal to him. Only Philip Bourneuf as Antonio and Felicia Montealegre as Jessica seemed to stretch beyond an adequate reading of Shakespeare's lines.

I take great exception to Mr. Marre's arrangement of the text. Having played a half dozen parts in various productions of the work, I am very familiar with it. I seriously doubt whether anyone who did not know it well could have followed the plot satisfactorily in Mr. Marre's arrangement. The Shylock-Jessica-Lorenzo scenes, in particular, were in the most fearful jumble and interwoven with the most ragged attempt at dance I have witnessed in some time. Shaw's oft-repeated claim of his own superiority over Shakespeare certainly seems borne out by the recent season

(Continued on page 27)



# DIALING AROUND

By SI MILLS

**T**HERE IS a new marriage in the offing—it may even have been consummated between writing and publication of this article; it's so very hard to keep pace with events. The union, which I call "Medevision," has all the possibilities of being a highly successful one if it is used properly and fully. My hopes are not wild dreams, for spasmodic starts have already taken place. There are great visions for a rosy future in the combination of medicine and television.

Back in 1950 doctors in three cities, Baltimore, Chicago and New York, held a long distance televised consultation. In this way the patient derived the benefit of the opinion of physicians he might never had been able to see otherwise. In the second half of 1952 there was an operation performed in one of the mid-western cities, part of the proceedings being carried on TV. (The entire operation could not be shown, mainly because it took too long.) In November of 1952 the American Medical Association met in Denver, Col., and two of its meetings were televised. The first dealt with medical progress in children's diseases; the second was concerned with advance in medical problems of the aged.

It would seem to me that all three examples will be aided greatly by the opening of educational channels. Undoubtedly the AMA meeting will have the most general appeal. There are many laymen who are interested in knowing about treatment of the very young, the very old, or anyone in between.

On the other hand, there is a strict limit on the number of persons who care to sit through the terminology involved in a consultation. Any telecasting company (understandably) would yield time only with reluctance, thinking primarily of the money—however little it be—if that time had been sold to an advertiser. "Oh, well, call it public service."

But is it? If most people won't sit through it, how can you possibly say it's in the public interest? There aren't many who care to or are able to sit and watch a surgical operation. One would presume that a "public interest" program would at least interest the public.

There are two possible methods of dealing with the problem, as far as I can see. The first is to telecast on



Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball in a scene from **I Love Lucy**, CBS's popular TV show every Monday evening at 9:00, EDT.

"closed wires." That is to say that only those who have a direct connection could receive the signal. The trouble with that is the expense involved. Who would pay for the set-up? Where would the wherewithal come from for an excursion into such a prescribed area? The idea has very definite limitations.

The second out might be found in educational channels. There would be a decided appeal to medical students, with costs being shared by schools in that portion of the country that could receive what is being offered. Then anyone interested could tune in. But of course our future physicians and surgeons would not be the only viewers. There would be those who could be classified as "the curious," the ones who wonder what an operation room looks like, the procedures and actions. Besides, reports on the progress of medicine might very well attract a sizeable number of persons interested in trends—parents, for instance.

You might question the earlier statement about limited appeal since I seem to defeat my own argument by enumerating potential viewers. I stick by my own guns. Even with the possible groups, it would still be too limited to attract any commercial sponsor—if, indeed, it ought to. Such material should not be used for monetary gain. (Can you imagine an operation being interrupted for an advertising blurb?) The audience may be limited, but it is not nonexistent. Educational TV seems the best medium.

## The Arthur Godfrey Program

Perhaps it's true that "fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong." Frankly, I doubt it. That many people can very easily include a vast number of incorrect guessers. I feel that way about the popularity of Arthur Godfrey.

Just how many people think him tops I don't exactly know. It is enough for the Columbia Broadcasting System to carry him on a total of four different

programs on radio, or television, or both. On one of those shows he appears "across the board" (five days a week). And his way is being paid by a variety of sponsors, although he is the fair-haired boy of CBS. This can mean either one of two things: the time-buyers like him, or they see his appeal to a wide audience. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that Mr. G. is on.

It should be admitted freely that there is good reason for the popularity of Godfrey. He is witty, gracious and easy-going. Take the last attribute first. His various programs are object-lessons in relaxation. One can just sit back and take it easy, savoring of his wit and graciousness as he displays them.

But the display is so slow. Godfrey is not the first or the only slow, relaxed humorist. There have been many such persons. One good recent example is the late Will Rogers, who chewed rapidly and twirled a small rope idly while he commented on current events. Then, a contemporary of Godfrey's, is Jack Benny, whose slow-gaited performance is sparked by other, more lively entertainers. The pace on the several Godfrey shows is set by him. The momentary bursts of life are too shortlived. His verbal parries with others are braked by his slow sureness, accompanied, as can be seen on TV, by a grin that too often bespeaks smugness. This smug grin is most obvious when the all too-frequent "double entendre" is gotten off. The man is a master at lines with double meanings. Almost anything said to him can be seized upon as fair bait for these side remarks. Though it is obvious that he possesses a sense of humor, his slowness is too much pronounced. One just waits too long between humorous remarks; and it is very much like a cow chewing on cud when there is a chuckling murmur loose in the studio audience. You begin to wonder if you have missed something, or if the people pres-

(Continued on page 26)

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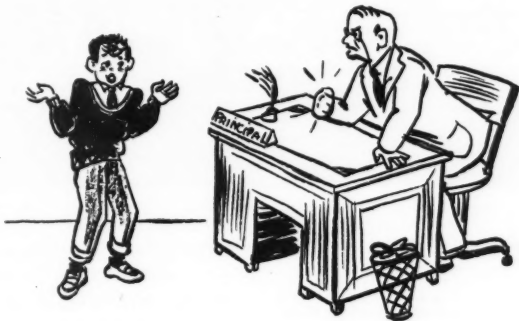
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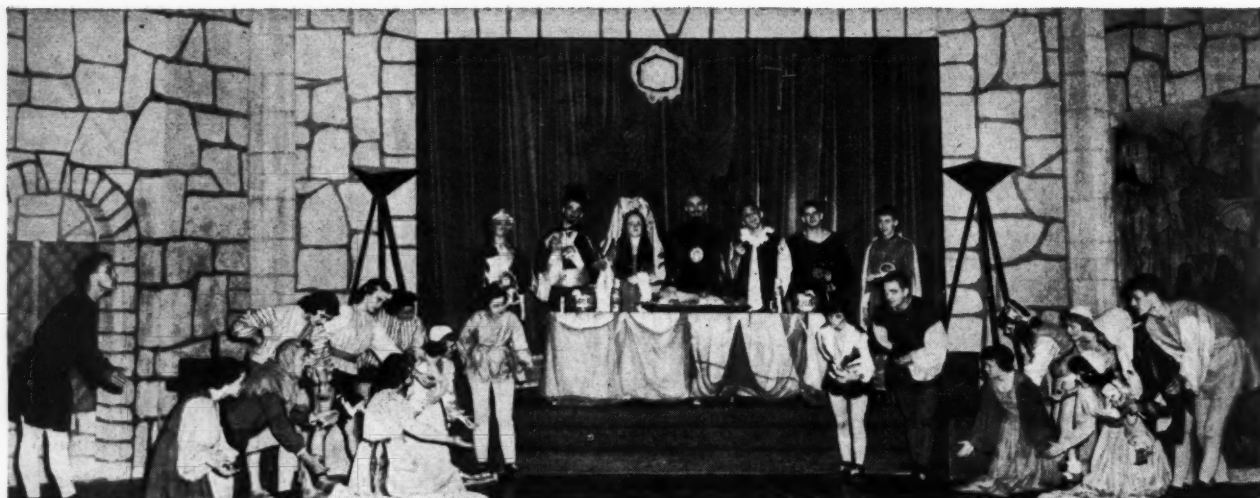
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The guests and dancers acknowledge the honored visitors in the banquet scene of the opening act of **Consider the Heavens** as presented by the Morehead Players of Morehead State College, Ky., under the direction of W. P. Covington, III, Head of Drama Department.

PLAY OF THE MONTH  
Edited by Earl W. Blank

## Staging **CONSIDER** the **HEAVENS**

By M. DAVID SAMPLES

**CONSIDER THE HEAVENS**, a historical romance comedy in three acts by M. David Samples, covering the important years of the life of the famous Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe of 16th Cen. 14 m.; 2 w.; extras. Royalty upon application to the author.

**C**onsider the Heavens is a period comedy able to be produced by any average school or community theatre. Though epic in nature the cast requires only some 16 persons. Others may be used as dancers, jugglers, fools and banquet guests depending on the will of the director. Three sets are necessary, but as the play is easily done in a unit setting this also represents no problem. The basic units required for all three scenes remain at all times. Only special drapes, units or special flats or props are exchanged. Organization by the technical staff makes this possible in less than a minute.

The script, the first original undertaken by the Morehead Players of Morehead State College, Kentucky, was remarkably staged under the excellent directorship of Prof. W. P. Covington III, Head of the Drama Department. Of special interest was the fact that more than half of the cast had never set foot on the stage before. Considering this fact the result was astounding. The largest attendance ever was recorded at the box office.

This premiere performance proved the script was stageworthy and consequently the task of rewriting was simple. I remained on the campus to do this revising for several days following the production and so profited from the reactions of students and faculty alike. Act I was edited and one minor climax rearranged; Act II remained virtually the same, while Act III was tightened

into one set and two scenes. In essence the play remained the same and proved itself to be at all times engrossing.

### The Story

The plot concerns Tycho Brahe, foremost astronomer of his day, in his struggle to find expression through his work (the study of the heavens) and his love (Christine, a peasant girl whose family lives on Tycho's father's land). For Tycho is a Danish noble and should neither spend his time star gazing or romancing with a farmer's daughter.

Act I shows Tycho in the company of his friend Paul Hainzel secretly observing an eclipse of the sun and presents the conflict between Otto Brahe, Tycho's father, over his unbecoming pastimes and Manderup, who is Tycho's arch enemy. Manderup in the company of Swen, a court fop, teases and annoys

Tycho into a duel at the height of the spectacular banquet scene. This dinner has been planned by Otto to celebrate the arranged engagement of Manderup to the German Baroness von Hildesheim-Wismar. In this duel Tycho has his nose cut off as the act ends. (It is well to remember that this historical play, like all others, is based upon historical facts, but that liberties must be taken in the arrangement of events in order to achieve necessary dramatic effect and unity.)

### Casting

Actually there is only one girl in the cast, Christine, though some dozen were used as dancers, servants and pages in the Morehead production.

Doubling is also possible. But it is impossible and impractical to dictate how any play should be cast. Those decisions lie with the director who must realize the talents of his own actors. Otto should be a large man, well built. Both he and Tycho have red hair. This is easily provided by powdering. Paul Hainzel is in ill health and frail and small in contrast to his friend Tycho. Manderup should appear a formidable opponent in height and looks. In any case the casting should find as much variety and contrast as possible for the sake of interest and effect.

Act II takes us to Paul Hainzel's garden in Germany where Tycho continues his work, homesick for Denmark, tormented in his love for Christine and brooding over his revenge on Manderup. At the advice of the French Ambassador, Dancey, he has had a golden mask made which he wears to cover his scars. News of his father's death and Manderup's attempt to add Tycho's inheritance to his own persuades him back home. Still his heart is afraid for fear Christine will not look on him because of his mask. However, because of his recent discoveries in astronomy, King Frederick of Denmark grants Tycho the



Another colorful, inspiring scene from Mr. Samples' **Consider the Heavens**.

Isle of Wheen, off the coast of Elsinor, so that he may build himself an observatory and bring glory to himself and Denmark.

At the family castle once again Tycho is reunited with Christine and together they vow to live in peace and happiness at Uraniborg, their Fortress of the Heavens, which Tycho is building on the Island of Wheen. But Tycho is noted for his temper and rashness (his tragic fault), and Christine will become his wife only if he forgets the revenge on Manderup that haunts him.

What these two do not know is that Manderup and Swen are conspiring with the Crown Prince in anticipation of old King Frederick's death, so that they might destroy Tycho's prestige. So long as the King lives Tycho is safe on his island.

Act III finds us at Uraniborg where all seems to be going well except for the occasional snoopings of Swen, who Tycho does not realize is a court spy despite the warnings of Christine, Jeppe, his faithful dwarf servant, and Claude and Bernard, two of his students. The King of Scotland has been visiting when news comes of Frederick's death. Tycho creates a scene and Christine leaves secretly to search for Tycho's champion, John Kepler. She knows that all will be lost in Denmark and the pain that Tycho will suffer at leaving his great observatories on the island.

Tycho, however, thinks she has left him because of his temper, as she had promised. Thus despondent in the last scene Tycho receives Manderup, who has come to tell him that his royal patronage is no more. Manderup's presence brings about the revenge duel in which the villain dies. A messenger arrives with a letter from Christine with the news that she has found the exiled Kepler and that Tycho has been given a court position in Austria by Emperor Rudolph.

While Tycho loses his island and is forced to leave his homeland because of his rashness, he regains his Christine and his work will continue with Kepler, and all ends well.

#### Directing

The construction of the play allows for contrast and change as much as possible. Comedy of an Elizabethan type is provided by the Fools at the opening. Epic wisdom is displayed by the King of Scotland and Dancey. Humor is represented in Swen and Claude and Bernard, while the Baroness, Manderup's bride-to-be, is a pure delight though she speaks only a few German phrases. While simplicity is the keynote of the production, the banquet scene at the close of Act I is spectacular in movement and color. There are dancers and jugglers and finally the duel. Music is provided. In this case Dr. John Long of Morehead arranged a score of introduction, background and dance music based on themes of the 16th Century.

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Further he assembled a consort of musicians which gave the play its fullest measure of color and life.

#### Rehearsals

A little more than the usual time was employed since the Morehead Players wished to give the script as honest and fair a trial as possible. The group rehearsed daily for some five weeks. Actually the script had been in their hands for study since my visit the previous May. Upon my arrival individual conferences were held to clarify any problems with the actors. Except for helping coach the fencing scenes and relieving Prof. Covington while he was otherwise occupied, I remained by choice, in the background.

#### Stage Problems

*Consider the Heavens* poses no problems beyond the ordinary. Writing a play based on the greater portion of a man's life in a period of history far removed from the present creates a problem in time and place. Considerable thought went into the arrangement of scenes and the set design finally decided upon. For the playwright wished to facilitate staging as much as possible. A unit setting served with ease. The inner proscenium and side arches remained at all times. Three steps led to the inner raised stage where the banquet scene took place. Before that scene the area was hidden by a colorful curtain. A garden drop was lowered for the garden scene and a trellis hid the right arch which served as a window in the first act. By the simple rearrangement of furniture and properties aided by expert lighting, each scene effected its purpose. This unit castle was painted in interestingly mingled cool and warm grays and blues to represent a stone interior. Since most all rooms in all castles may appear somewhat alike, this type of setting proved most valuable. Contrast in color was provided and the stage highlighted by colorful tapestries and costumes, as well as drops.

#### Lighting

The usual general and specific lighting principles were used in the Morehead production. There is every opportunity for the use of highlights and shadows. Act I provides for the use of an eclipse effect which was shown by passing a circular tin disk slowly across a baby

spot so that the reflection was cast on the opposite interior wall. Special colored birds' eye spots focused on the rear curtained wall during the banquet scene added splashes of delight to the eye. A simple blue spot for moonlight in the garden scene served well. The lighting, like every other aspect of the script, may be as simple as one chooses to make it.

#### Costuming

Budget-wise, the costume committee revamped, rearranged and imaginatively altered pieces already on hand to provide a brilliant array of clothes of the 16th Century period. Using a standard costume text by Dr. Fairfax Proudfit Walkup, the committee easily and inexpensively dressed the actors.

#### Make-up

The only make-up problem was in providing Tycho with a gold mask. This was done by using a nose putty, a thin covering over the nose and under the eyes which was then painted with glittering gold paint. Otto and the King of Scotland wore crepe beards; Manderup and Swen's Van Dykes were penciled on and served very well.

#### Budget

The main expenditures were in lumber to build the four columns and elevations and the muslin for the tapestries. Much of that was already on hand. Chairs of the period were made by extending the backs of ordinary chairs and covering them with muslin as well as about the bottom in order to give a more solid wooden effect. The usual amount of scene paint was required. Inexpensive papier-mache objects were made and colored to decorate the banquet table. Some new trimmings and laces were bought to add to the costumes. There was no exceptional expense.

#### Publicity

Announcements in the season's preview schedule and subsequent play bills (*Consider the Heavens* was the last show of the season) plus flyers mailed to the Morehead Players subscription audience and articles in the school and county papers attracted a record crowd. There were the faculty and student body as well as the town of several thousand to pull from. Usually the Morehead productions play only two nights, due to the largeness of the auditorium, but three nights were tried successfully.

#### Results

The reviews rated the production "successful." Discerning members of the faculty were pleased with the script's epic sweep, its message, its humor and conflict. While there were times when problems arose on stage with inexperienced actors, still the production was always interesting.





*Mr. Barry's Etchings*, Troupe 1082, Herkimer, N. Y., High School, Francis O. Gabler, Sponsor.



*The Little Dog Laughed*, Central Union High School (Troupe 325), El Centro, Calif., Abigail A. Dunn, Director.



*Cheaper by the Dozen*, Troupe 99, Weston, W. Va., High School, Mary Christine Swint, Director.

## Thespian Chatter

By Our  
Student  
Thespians

### Coquille, Oregon

(Thespian Troupe 1066)

Thespian Troupe 1066 was organized early in the fall of 1952 under the guidance of Mr. Win Kelly. Officers were elected, and several activities were undertaken for the ensuing year. First, the senior class started things rolling by giving *George Washington Slept Here*. The junior class followed with *Heaven Can Wait*, and the final and most important activity — to the Thespians was their first (to be annual) "Thespian Night" — in which they presented two one-act plays, *The Happy Journey* and *The Columbine Club on the Air*. These were all given under the direction of Mr. Kelly.—Garrett Cochran, Secretary

### War, West Virginia

(Thespian Troupe 260)

We find *Student Director* a helpful thing. When our director has to be away from practice, this student director, who has blocked the play, been at readings of the play, try-outs and practices, takes over and does a good job. For each one-act play we have a different director, and then a senior is chosen for the three-act play. Those selected for student directors take it seriously and do a good job.—Kathryn Ann Bryson, Secretary

### Jamestown, New York

(Thespian Troupe 364)

For our annual Christmas assembly Troupe 364 presented *The Cornhusk Doll*, a one-act play. We just finished working with the debating groups on our second annual musical production, *Mr. Touchdown, U.S.A.* This is an or-



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iginal show written and directed by the students with the aid of our troupe sponsor, Miss Myrtle Paetznick and Lyceum sponsor, Robert C. Wilson. The show was overwhelmingly received by a full house.

Right now we are preparing for our annual formal induction of new members to be held in March. At this time the outstanding Juniors who have enough credit points are taken into Thespians. Our ceremony is a very impressive one, all in candle light, and with every member taking part.

Troupe 364 would like to hear from other troupes about their activities. If anyone would care to write us, it is in care of Jamestown High School, James-

town, N. Y.—Sally Leonard, Secretary

**Eau Claire, Wisconsin**  
(Thespian Troupe 1166)

Troupe 1166 has provided our high school as well as our community with superb entertainment this year. Our one-act play, which received "A" ratings at the district and regional meets, was presented also for the student body, the faculty and the Sanitarium. Some of our talented dramatists have written and presented interesting skits for our pep assemblies. We found that we could enjoy fairy tales as much as the first and second graders when we worked on self expression by telling these stories to the younger grade school children. Each week we broadcast our *Regis in Action*

radio program over a local station.

Our major production, *Murder in a Nunnery*, played to two packed houses on January 25 and 26. To complete the well-rounded phases of dramatics we are preparing a number of one-act plays which include such presentations as *Gossip* and *The Princess Marries the Page*. The latter will participate in the Diocesan Play Festival.—Kathleen Bruegen, Secretary

**Payson, Utah**

(Thespian Troupe 549)

Troupe 549 presented as its fall production *June Wedding*, a very delightful comedy under the direction of the troupe sponsor, Arch Williams. The second major production will be *You Can't Take*



The formal installation ceremony of Troupe 897, Booker T. Washington High School, Houston, Texas, Roi L. Hopkins, Sponsor.

## CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE PRODUCING SHAKESPEARE

BY FREDERICK THON

Whenever the question arises of "What play shall we do next?" the plays of Shakespeare never for long go unmentioned. They may be suggested, perhaps, less out of respect for his consummate poetry of word and vision than out of a desperate hope that one of his plays will miraculously reconcile the opposing camps of those committed to "boxoffice" and those devoted to "art." But whatever the source of attention, our Will, master dramatist, most frequently obliges and the miracle comes to pass.

His plays act with such fire that they transfix equally the groundlings, the highbrows, the cocktail set—provided some thought is given to production beforehand. A first consideration is that the plays are poetry. Everything derives from that fact. It determines the style of acting, of staging, of production. It means that the whole approach and interpretation must of necessity be poetic, not real. Realism in Shakespeare is the ultimate incongruity. Practically of course because of his many scenes, realism is impossible. Yet the attempt is frequently undertaken to bring actuality to the script, perhaps under the impression that an audience must be persuaded, by verisimilitude, that these are real people in real settings of a certain time and actual place. The people must be real in order that the drama be real—or so it is argued. The more actual the Romeo and Juliet, the more convincing their love. The blossoms on the balcony vines must bloom.

Now an audience always knows that this is a play in a theatre; but it will, if profoundly moved, relinquish its disbelief and accept the fictional as if it were true; often, as a matter of fact, it is ready to join with the players in make-believe even from the beginning of the play, having come there for that purpose. Whether a play is convincing or not has much less to do with its surface reality of acting and setting than with the inner consequence of the actors' projection. What is projected is the realization by the actors that what they are dealing with is poetry. Part of this is simply a matter of the voice itself; it must be full, rich, distinct, agile, and the body used as an instrument in accord with the grace and power required. But beyond this is the mind of understanding which perceives the meanings within the script, spies out those mercurial delights which please and those dark unconscious configurations which unite and terrify.

These delights and configurations are structural as a symphony and so a further determination must be that the script is done entire, uncut. This may mean a prolonged show, an audience given but one at most intermissions, but the full architectonic beauty, the sweep, power, and nobly passionate intensity of a Shakespearean drama compel this or we have but travesty. To know how seldom this is realized we need only attend the first performance at hand and it will be typical of hundreds.

But this need not mean that the play be reproduced in an Elizabethan-replica theater. There is no need for such an anachronism. That way lies the fetish of the antiquarians and the death by pin-pointed detail of the very spirit here sought. In a space stage or by arena production, the freedom, flexibility, and concentration necessary to vitality will be both possible and enhanced. A few elements such as platforms may be useful.

In summary then we note that Shakespeare deserves consideration when the need for a play arises. His works will prove most rewarding if approached as poetry of word and vision rather than proscribed by realism. The casting and the staging must free this poetry. The text should emerge intact. And an Elizabethan type of stage is scarcely necessary.

These considerations beforehand are few. They are so few because they are but a beginning.

**It with You.** Formal initiation for twelve new members was held on December 10. Payson High won the sweepstakes trophy in the Utah State Drama and Interpretation meet last year by receiving the greatest number of points in all dramatic activities entered. Plans are going forward for producing the annual high school opera. One-act plays this year will be done in arena style.—Paul Tervort, Reporter

### Elkview, West Virginia (Thespian Troupe 152)

Dramatics at Elkview started off with a bang when a one-act play entitled *Home to Mother* got under way. Along with the play an Indian Dance and a skit were presented to celebrate Columbus Day. Our next production was two one-act plays entitled *Wildcat Willie* and *Campaign for Two*. The proceeds helped pay for the stage scenery that was purchased last spring.

Hard work and long hours of practice by members of the cast made the three-act comedy, *Almost Summer*, an outstanding success of the year. This production was presented in December. During the month of February we plan *Elks-a-Poppin'*, our annual revue. This is considered the favorite show of both stu-

dents and parents.—Juliette Auger, Member

### Albuquerque, New Mexico (Thespian Troupe 1174)

With no auditorium, members of Troupe 1174 resorted to circle staging. Result: overwhelming acceptance by the students and city. Their last production, *Mother Is a Freshman*, was presented by the senior class to standing-room-only audiences for four nights. Twenty were initiated in December candlelight ceremonies, with a banquet planned in March. The All-Thespian production this spring will be an original three-act comedy by Thomas Erhard, a member of the Highland High Faculty. This annual play is produced, cast and directed entirely by Thespians. —Margie Wilhite, Reporter

### Dover, Delaware (Thespian Troupe 489)

Troupe 489 in November gave a request performance for the Delaware Dramatic Conference, demonstrating the use of plays for psychological study. The play, written by Nora Stirling, was entitled *The Ins and Outs*. In December we gave two evening performances of *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton, which were quite successful. We exchanged

tickets with the A. I. Dupont High School Drama Club in Wilmington, as we discovered that they were giving the same play. In February the Thespians are sponsoring a playbill of three one-act plays: *The Boor*, *Trifles* and *A Sunny Morning*. Plans are also being made for the initiation of new members into our troupe.

We have taken advantage of reduced rate and free tickets for the performances of some professional plays in Wilmington. They have been made available through the University of Delaware by an anonymous giver. Some of the plays we have seen through this plan are: *Time Out for Ginger*, *The Shrike*, *John Brown's Body*, *Paint Your Wagon* and *The Crucible*.—Charlotte Kellogg, Secretary

### Council Bluffs, Iowa (Thespian Troupe 964)

Troupe 964 has a busy schedule this year. As a result of participation in *George Washington Slept Here*, *Ice-bound* and the annual Road Show, twenty-eight new members were initiated at a formal banquet in the Hotel Chieftain here in December.

The troupe is now preparing the third act of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* for presentation at the State University of Iowa Play Production Festival in March. Another initiation will be held in May for those eligible through work in *Meet a Body* and Sheridan's *The Rivals*. —Florence Everest, President

### Richland, Washington (Thespian Troupe 640)

Ifn it had been *Thunder Egg* instead of *Thunder Rock*, it couldn't have been better polished.

Ifn both feet had been on earth instead of *One Foot in Heaven*, it couldn't have been half so much fun.

Ifn *Mr. Barry's Etchings* had been in sculpture, he wouldn't have caused so much commotion.

Ifn it had been any other group than Thespian Troupe 640, it couldn't have been done.—Elinor Cooke, Reporter

### Omaha, Nebraska (Thespian Troupe 738)

Troupe 738 of the National Thespian Society recently gave its annual fall play. Our choice this year was *Eastward in Eden*, the love story of Emily Dickinson. The play has inherent qualities that lend themselves well to high school production and educational theatre. Mimeographed sheets of Emily Dickinson's poems were distributed to all of the pupils in the school through the English classes and helped to further interest in this original poet. The production played to appreciative audiences for one matinee and two evening performances. Under the expert and inspired direction of Mrs. Doris Stevens, our troupe sponsor, the play presented more than mere entertainment to both the cast and the audiences. Emily Dickinson's poems,

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Pull up a chair here on the Bradford's front porch and watch the fun. The Bradfords are really quite normal folks — until Susie starts things humming. Your see, Susie finds some old letters Dad wrote to Mother before they were married. Susie decides to use them as the basis for a novel but she forgot to change the names. You can well imagine the excitement created when the novel is published with some of the names involving such folks as an old flame of Dad's (now a Hollywood star), an old admirer of Mother's (now Susie's publisher) and Mr. Caxton, who is Dad's boss. Highly Seasoned is just the play for any laughter diet.

## THE MERRY MATCHMAKER —

A comedy by Vera Lisle  
3m 8w interior setting  
Royalty \$10.00 Price 75 cents



Lotta Pepp is a born matchmaker. Her happiest moments exist when she's trying to bring together two people whom she thinks are suited to each other. Traveling in a trailer with her brother Fuller, they stop at the Shepherds' where a sign indicates that a parking place is for rent. Immediately, Lotta goes to work at her favorite pastime — *matchmaking*. She has several combinations to work on and although situations arise and complications set in Lotta does a "bang-up" job as The Merry Matchmaker. There are a "lotta" laughs in this brand new play that you won't want to miss.

# BAKER'S



# PLAYS

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some of the best of American literature, were brought to life when incorporated into the lines of *Eastward in Eden*. The play was a memorable experience for all of those connected with it.—*Kay Clatterbuck, Reporter*

### Granville, Ohio (Thespian Troupe 1031)

Troupe 1031 had a very interesting speaker on December 8, 1952. We had Mr. William Brasmer, assistant professor of theatre arts at Denison University. His talk was on directing and some of the techniques in play producing. We asked him to speak on this subject because some of us will be directing our own one-act plays in the coming month.

He said that directing meant creating, and some people who were very poor actors could become very good directors. A director has three things to work with. The first thing is the script. The minute one looks at a script he should cross out all stage directions. This should be done because the directions given are merely one person's interpretation. The director should study the play very carefully before trying to pick characters. The characters in the play are the second thing that a director has to work with. He should think of the action and situations in the play before he begins to think of what people would fit best in the part. The last thing the director has to work with is the stage. The audience should be able to see the actors at all times.

Make the area of the stage compact and use only the scenery that is necessary. When one is choosing characters pick the people who can create. Remember emotions and respect individuality. Put your own ideas, without forcefulness, into the consciousness of someone else.—*Ann LeFeuvre, Secretary*

### Tonasket, Washington (Thespian Troupe 910)

Troupe 910 has had a pretty eventful year so far. We had our initiation followed by a luncheon. Our initiation was formal, since we decided that a formal

initiation meant so much more to the Thespian elects, and leaves a more vivid picture in their minds. The luncheon was a pot luck affair; it was quite attractive as we had many different kinds of foods with a wide variety of colors and textures. Then for dessert we had a beautiful cake, furnished by Miss Snowden, our advisor; it was gloriously decorated for the occasion.

We have given three three-act plays so far this year: *O, Father, Good Nite, Ladies*, and our senior play, *Aunt Cathie's Cat*. Our Thespian Troupe has reached the peak of 26, the largest group of Thespians ever to be in our school.—*Dorothy Fisher, Secretary*

### Shillington, Pennsylvania (Thespian Troupe 1206)

Because Troupe 1206 was organized at a late date, April 5, 1952, at the Regional Conference held in Reading, Pa., the activities of the troupe were limited to three meetings. Two of these were devoted to routine business and the third one was a combination of business and of pleasure in the form of a farewell for the senior members.

A junior member also interested in art made a program for each member and used Thespian colors in arranging it. The program was called *A Play in One Act* with the following scenes: Scene One — We present the juniors; Scene Two — We present the seniors; Scene Three — We attend to business; Scene



*Jane Eyre*, Troupe 25, Spanish Fork, Utah, High School, B. Davis Evans, Sponsor.



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Four — We eat a snack. The troupe has committees working on (1) choosing a name in addition to Troupe 1206; (2) on writing a constitution.

The group decided on the name Melthalian, which is a word coined by the group from Thalia, the Greek Muse of Comedy and Melpomene, the Greek Muse of Tragedy.

At the award assembly in the presence of the whole student body the president of Melthalian presented the framed charter to the principal of the high school with the request that it be placed in the main corridor of the building.—*Barbara Boyer, Secretary*

### Mesquite, Texas (Thespian Troupe 541)

The Dreyfuss Club located on White Rock Lake, Dallas, Texas, provided a beautiful setting for the formal initiation ceremony of Thespian Troupe 541 on January 31.

Ten new members were initiated before a huge wood-burning fireplace with colorful decorations of blue and white used throughout the hall and on the long refreshment table. Various members had drawn large pictures of the Thespian Emblem and made original programs to complete the decorative scheme.

Jim Marchman, president, assisted by Mrs. Rebecca Prunkard, Sponsor, conducted the ceremony before a group of 75 Thespian members and guests. A

floor show and dancing concluded the entertainment.—*Charlotte Fyffe, Secretary*

### Glen Ellyn, Illinois (Thespian Troupe 233)

After the presentation of the junior class play, *Our Miss Brooks*, 14 new Thespians were initiated into Troupe 233 last spring. Then, when June brought the end of school, six Thespians attended the National Conference at Indiana University. This year Thespians sponsored the annual Sweater Hop, and continued its support of Kits and Skits, the junior-senior dramatics club. November brought the senior class play, *Our Town*. Now attention is turned to the junior class play, *Father of the Bride*, presented in March. Also, many Thespians had prominent roles in the exchange convocations, which were taken to schools in the Glenbard area. In the middle of February, an initiation was held and 17 new members were admitted. The next Thespian sponsored production is the Kits and Skits play to be given in early April.—*Nancy Reed, Secretary*

### Wichita, Kansas (Thespian Troupe 58)

Troupe 58 was just reorganized last year, so most of our time has been spent organizing and planning for an extra-special troupe which will serve as a foundation for the East High Thespians in the years to come.

The first important event on our cal-

endar is an initiation ceremony — our first since reorganizing. Then, we hope to plan some joint meetings with Thespian troupes of the other high schools in Wichita and, in the near future, we want to take over the production of at least one play. We are all working toward our goal of a truly great Thespian troupe.—*Judy McCartney, Secretary*

### Weston, West Virginia (Thespian Troupe 99)

Thespian Troupe 99 of Weston High School presented on December 5, 1952, *I Remember Mama* as its annual Thespian play. The cast enjoyed every minute of practice. It is one of the most fascinating plays to produce. There is so much one can do with a play such as *I Remember Mama*. Every part is different and we all adjusted ourselves to each one. Another unusual thing about the play is the set. Above all, the one thing that delighted us most of all and our audience as well, was the costumes we used. By borrowing from various families in town we acquired costumes to fit this period. All who saw the play were delighted. If you're looking for a play that will delight the whole family, young and old alike, we at Weston High School recommend *I Remember Mama*.—*Shirley Allen, Reporter*

### Ajo, Arizona (Thespian Troupe 969)

This year has been the most active in quite a while for Thespian Troupe

969. Our troupe has at the present only five members, but we have accomplished a great deal. At the close of this year we hope to initiate about ten new members at a banquet for which we are now making preparations. In order to create more interest in dramatics we have started a Dramatics Club. This is for anyone interested in dramatics, who does not have the requirements to become a Thespian. To start off the year we presented the play *Seventeenth Summer*. The juniors and seniors have now started working on their junior and senior play, *One Wild Night*. For those who have not had a chance to work in previous plays we are working on some one-act plays. These will be presented at assemblies and for P.T.A.—*Paula Blow, Secretary*

**Bristow, Oklahoma**  
(Thespian Troupe 183)

Fun and hard work was the theme of the 1951-52 season for Thespian Troupe 183. Handicapped by antiquated auditorium facilities, the troupe and sponsor, Esther Burris, had to work extra hard to stage effectively such projects as *The Devil and Daniel Webster* and *George Washington Slept Here*. Backstage parties, lively club meetings, and success brought by the hard work furnished the fun. Supported by an enthusiastic student body, the Thespians also presented *Happy Journey*, *Moonset*, and *If the Shoe Pinches*, and cooperated with the vocal department to produce the operetta, *Blossom Time*. Two of the one-act plays mentioned were presented successfully at state contests, and the radio play, *Air Raid*, was rated superior in the state finals. Twelve of this year's club return next year to carry on Troupe 183's reputation of being one of the school's most active and beneficial organizations.—*Bill Lipe, Reporter*

**Blacksville, West Virginia**  
(Thespian Troupe 54)

During 1951-52 Troupe 54 sponsored *Up on Old Smoky*, a two-act operetta, and a three-act play, *The Ghost Parade*. Our troupe also had members who took



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part in the senior play, *Lady, Be Good* and the *Junior Variety Show*. The Thespians of our school are taught not only to act but to help in building all kinds of stage equipment. As of now we have thirty-one members and will lose six by graduation.—*Mona Joy Tuttle, Secretary*

**Arroyo Grande, California**  
(Thespian Troupe 1019)

Starting the 1951-52 school year off in a blaze of glory, the Drama Class of Arroyo Grande Union High School presented *Don't Take My Penny* under the direction of Miss Sara Steigerwalt, Thespian Director. In March *Double*

*Door* was given by the same group. The production was enthusiastically received with "rave" notices. Troupe 1019 has been extremely busy presenting melodrama pantomimes for outside organizations. In order to raise money for the National Thespian Convention at Bloomington, Indiana, our troupe sponsored a Fashion Show, two one-act plays, a chorus jamboree, and "Buy your way out of school" in which tickets were sold and students were dismissed three minutes ahead of time for each ticket purchased. The High School P.T.A. donated \$100 to the drama department because of the excellent work done. In May the Thespian banquet was held with thirty-seven members and guests present. Thirteen new members were initiated. —*Nancy Bowman, Secretary*

**Richmond, California**  
(Thespian Troupe 637)

To start off the '51-'52 season some of the members of Troupe 637 were first seen in *Men Are like Streetcars*. The next show, *Everybody on Deck*, which was given in November, was student written and directed. At our second student-written and directed show, *Bali-hoo*, there was "S.R.O." at both performances. A one-act play, *Grandfather Flannigan*, which also was student written, was presented for several public organizations. Our last play was *We Shook the Family Tree*. Without the aid of the Stagecraft Class and their technical advice, our plays would not have been a success.—*Beverly Higley, Secretary*



Green Valley, Troupe 171, Grafton, W. Va., High School, Ruth Batten, Sponsor.



## DIALING

(Continued from page 15)

ent are joking among themselves.

I'm willing to doubt my own opinions—especially since there is so much sentiment in the opposite direction, but "fifty million Frenchmen" may still be wrong. Occasionally, I will turn on a Godfrey program, realizing that a reviewer's duty to his readers is one of reporting on whatever he can. I still have to come away from the set dissatisfied. Maybe I'm wrong.

### Radio and Television Boners

Mistakes are not something new. Proof of that is the eraser put on the end of pencils. People are expected to blunder occasionally, to rub out what has been done wrong and to start over again. But there are times when you can't make a correction. For instance, have you ever tried putting toothpaste back in the tube when you've squeezed out more than you want?

In radio, especially before transcribed shows allowed for correction, the "live" performer was on something of a spot. His mistakes in script reading were out over the air and headed for listeners before he realized that he'd slipped. The mistakes became known as "fluffs"; and although not too common, especially among professionals, they did (and do) happen.

About twenty years ago, the announcer Harry Von Zell came out with a fluff that still has the radio industry talking. He said, in his usual stentorian tones, while introducing Herbert Hoover, "Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States—Huber Heever—Heebert Hoover—ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States."

Then there was the time when announcer Andre Baruch came out with "Good ladies, evening and gentlemen of the audio radiance."

More recently, at the Republican Convention in Chicago, during July, 1952, Chairman Martin made the announcement that immediately after that evening's session, there would be "a meeting of the credentials committee in the Blackstone Hell."

Now there is a newcomer to the field—television. And just so long as the show is not being recorded on film (kinescoped), there is every possibility of "fluffs" of radio plus those of any visual entertainment medium. And the "fluffs" are being made too.

What with the number of people directly connected with the video production, a figure that would make any radio producer squirm, it is a wonder that there aren't more boners. Backstage has often been referred to as being a good example of "organized confusion." It ought to be what with prop men, technicians, cameramen, dressers, electricians, make-up men, musicians, sponsor representatives, script card people, and of course actors and actresses. Then too there may be network repre-

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Wilbur's Honey Bea, 3m, 4w

Life o' the Party, 6m, 6w

Sure As You're Born, 3m, 3w

Wilbur Minds the Baby, 3m, 5w

Wilbur's Wild Night, 4m, 4w

Wilbur Saw It First, 4m, 3w

Foxy Grandma, 4m, 3w

Shock Of His Life, 3m, 3w

Uncle Tom's Crabbin', 5m, 6w

Books, 50 cents each

If Mother Only Knew, 5m, 6w

Happy Daze, 6m, 6w

Just Ducky, 6m, 6w

Desperate Ambrose, 6m, 6w

Mother Does the Talking, 6m, 7w

Stoney Jones, 2m, 4w (extras)

WEST VIRGINIA: All our hats are off to this writer (Donald Payton) who really knows how to write an enjoyable teen-age play. We have presented all of his plays for they are so successful and enjoyable. Please let me know when his next play is published. — Mrs. Johnson, Director of Dramatics, Bluefield, West Virginia.

WISCONSIN: We feel that "Rest Assured" has been one of our top productions and we've had some mighty good ones in the past too. The cast loved it and the audiences were more than enthusiastic over it. — Rev. Guy E. Guyon, Central Catholic High School, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

TEXAS: Miss Mary Frances Ball, Director of Dramatics, McLean Jr. High School, Ft. Worth, Texas, recently wrote us as follows: "Donald Payton writes, in my opinion, almost the only plays which are perfectly adapted to junior high school. Our audience loved 'Wilbur Saw It First' and so did I!"

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sentatives, press agents and any number of messengers.

At one rehearsal there was the usual milling around, when a man carrying a small package stepped out of the crowd and shouted, "Who ordered a bologna sandwich?"

But the humorous moments are most often supplied by those who are not supposed to be somewhere on stage, and these boners quite often go out to viewers. There was the time on *Suspense* when, during a tense moment, an actress walked to a supposed closet door. The murderer might very well be hiding there. It took build-up to reach this breath-taking moment. She opened the door and there—there was a cameraman.

On the Robert Montgomery production of *Night Must Fall* the audience was keyed up as the star walked along carrying a hatbox believed to contain the head of a murder victim. Unintentional comic relief was added when a stagehand was seen walking along blithely swinging an oil can.

Also on the Montgomery series there was the occasion when a man was murdered in a pay phone booth. It had been planned to heighten dramatic effect by showing the suddenly dropped receiver swinging back and forth. The idea was fine, until the height was sud-

denly cut down when the camera focused too low and showed a stagehand tapping gently to keep the instrument moving.

And what with the use of films on TV, it seems almost inevitable that the "clips" be mixed up occasionally. During one of the discussions of experts on the coming Joe Louis-Ezzard Charles fight, the moderator announced that there would follow scenes from the training camps. Surprise! The films were those shot in a Korean prisoner-of-war camp.

The viewer gets a big laugh too when slides are shown upside down, or when some inexplicable mistake is made. There was the time an announcer was extolling the pleasures of a particular brand of beer. He went through the scheduled routine of pouring himself a glassful of the brew, savoring it, smacking his lips. No one was astounded when he continued to speak about the perfect blending. And then, the commercial over, it was a bit difficult to tell why the camera swung around slightly, just enough to show Mr. Announcer pouring his "delicious" drink into a nearby wastebasket!

"To err is human, to forgive divine." And when it comes to radio-television boners you can be not only divine for forgiving, but thoroughly amused as well.



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## THEATRE

(Continued from page 14)

at the City Center.

Paul Gregory, who found great success in his presentation of the First Drama Quartette reading the *Don Juan in Hell* section of Shaw's *Man and Superman*, is repeating the formula with like consequences. A trio of actors, Judith Anderson, Raymond Massey, Tyrone Power, with atmospheric help from a chorus of twenty voices, are appearing in readings from Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body*. Once again, large crowds are flocking to the huge Century Theatre where the Quartette held forth. Charles Laughton, who is an acting member of the former group, has directed the current reading. More of this kind of thing on as high an artistic plane should be attempted. It brings into the theatre dramatic material which may otherwise only gather dust on our library shelves.

Another serious contender for the coveted Pulitzer and New York Drama Critics' Circle awards came in during the past month. This is *Picnic* by William Inge, the author of *Come Back, Little Sheba*. Some of the local reviewers feel that this is the finest new play of the current season. Other leading contenders for these honors are Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, a study of the Salem witch trials and Arthur Laurents' *The Time of the Cuckoo*, the Shirley Booth play of which I spoke at some length several issues ago.

The most promising new playwrighting talent of the season is George Axelrod. His *Seven Year Itch*, a first play, is filling the Fulton Theatre almost eight times a week. Tom Ewell, Vanessa Brown and Neva Patterson are the principal actors in this romantic complexity.

This season, as during several seasons past, the major efforts were put into musicals. The town's newest hit is *Wonderful Town*, a musical based upon *My Sister Eileen*. Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields, who adapted the original comedy success from Ruth McKenny's stories, have written the book of *Wonderful Town*. Betty Comden and Adolph Green, the authors of *On the Town*, *Billion Dollar Baby* and several successes for Hollywood, have written the lyrics. Leonard Bernstein has composed the score. To these talents add the choreography of Jerome Robbins and a cast headed by Rosalind Russell plus an unlimited supply of backers—result: the hit musical now on view at the Winter Garden.

The usual procedure of Broadway to Hollywood has been reversed in the case of *Hazel Flagg*. This musical is adapted from the film *Nothing Sacred*,



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one of the great films of the late Carole Lombard. This was the one you will recall about the girl who is supposed to be dying from radium poisoning as a result of having worked as a painter of watch dials. The film was the creation of Ben Hecht, who has done some work on *Hazel Flagg*. Jule Styne contributed the score. Everyone is not unanimous in praise of the work but all agree that Helen Gallagher is wonderful in the leading role.

Victor Moore, one of the best beloved actors of our theatre, is adding another great portrait to his personal gallery. Alongside of the Rev. Dr. Moon (alias Public Enemy No. 13) and Vice-President Throttlebottom must hang Gramps of Paul Osborn's *On Borrowed Time*. The play was a great success in the late '30's when Dudley Digges and Frank Conroy played it. It is the tale of how Gramps kept Death up in the tree in his yard until he is satisfied that his grandson Pud has an assured happy future.

Another old favorite is returning next week. The production of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, which has been winning friends in several capitals of Europe, is returning to Broadway. It will be good to welcome the inhabitants of Charleston's Catfish Row back to their native soil.

A few afternoons ago, I attended a forum sponsored by the American National Theatre and Academy on the current woes of the theatre. Many theories were advanced—the lack of adequate training and help offered young playwrights and actors (the theatre being one of the arts that can only be learned by doing), the exorbitant costs of production, the lack of theatre on a national basis, high admission prices, the competition of television and the film. It is always stimulating to attend such discussions and to learn the views of such theatre personages as John Burrell, the director; Sherman Ewing, the producer; Geraldine Page, the star of *Midsummer* and one of our newest stars; the aforementioned Neva Patterson. Such discussions are important but what the theatre really needs is an enthusiastic audience... an audience who knows the theatre from having presented plays themselves such as all the Thespians are doing. It is this audience which can share in a true appreciation of what makes a good production and which stimulates the workers in the theatre toward doing their very best. This theatre, I am confident, will evolve just because there are so many of us who want it and who will support it and coerce (if needs be) others into doing the same.

## DRAMATICS

(Continued from page 11)

though usually not very much when you divide the total by the hours you spend working.

Conclusion: there's an opening for every one in amateur theatre if he has ingenuity enough to find it.

Now, to teaching. The field of teaching can be very rewarding to someone who loves dramatics work. As I said in the detailed discussion of the subject, you must check on your individual state requirements and make sure you get all the necessary education courses while you are in college. For high school teaching you will probably want to study a fifth year to get an A.M. degree, and for college and university teaching, a Ph.D. Once you have secured a good position, you should find that running a high school drama program or taking part in one at a college is a very satisfactory set-up. If you do not wish to devote full time to teaching dramatics, then remember that the ability to direct extra-curricular dramatics makes a nice addition to any type of teaching program—an addition not only in interest but usually in salary. Don't miss a good chance for security and happiness in your own field by overlooking teaching dramatics as a career.

And now for one last word.

We have been talking of the many ways in which you may use your high school dramatics after graduation. It is only natural that some of you—perhaps a large number—will not fit into any of my classifications. What about that group? What about those of you who never go on with dramatics?

Just suppose I meet you on the street ten years from now. Naturally I think back to these articles, so I say to you, "Are you working with a theatre group these days? Have you been in any plays lately?" And you say, "No, I haven't been in a play since I was in high school. I never did a thing with my high school dramatics."

That's what you say, and of course you mean it. "I never did a thing with my high school dramatics. All that work, and I never did a thing with it!" But let's think a minute. Is that really so? Granted you haven't been in a play, you haven't worn grease-paint or memorized any lines. But what about your dramatics in general? Is it true that you've "never done a thing" with that?

First, what kind of a person are you? Well, if you are anywhere near the average of the hundreds of Thespians I have met at the National Conferences, you have some special dividends from those "unused" high school dramatics of yours. You have poise and self-confidence. Your posture is good; your gestures are smooth and controlled. You know how to walk, how to sit down and get up again without awkwardness. You meet people easily and graciously. You

have a good voice and you know how to use it. Your vocabulary is a little better than average, but even more important, the words are pronounced with a nice, relaxed accuracy so that people find it pleasant to listen to you and easy to follow what you have to say. Sounds like quite an array of virtues, doesn't it? And yet, isn't it true that you really do possess most of them and that you owe them in large part to your high school stage experience?


Second, how are you getting along in your job, whatever it may be? Whether you realize it or not, from the time that you reported for your first interview you were again collecting dividends on your dramatics training. My former high school students—my star actors and actresses—are holding down all sorts of jobs in all sorts of places from business offices to electronic research laboratories. You shall find as they have that you are better equipped to make oral reports, to serve on committees, to stand up on your feet and

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A friend of mine once told me that in the midst of a bad accident he took time to be glad he was an actor. He was panicky with terror, but his safety



Father of the Bride, Troupe 935, Lawton, Okla., High School, Mrs. Opal Ford, Sponsor.

express your ideas, to meet people and persuade them to your way of thinking because of your experience in appearing before audiences. Why do business men crowd into evening courses in public speaking? Because they find themselves lacking in just that training which you received in high school dramatics.

Third, has your high school dramatics carried over into your social and family life? You can trace its influence in many little ways. For instance, I believe that you listen more appreciatively to drama on radio, TV or stage; that whether you actually think of it or not you get an extra enjoyment out of a well produced play. Then too you probably enjoy reading plays. Do you realize that many people don't know how to read plays? They get bogged down in character names and stage directions, and they can't get any meaning out of the lines. What a field of literature is closed to them! But it is open to you, through your knowledge of dramatics.

and that of others depended on his being calm. So he played it like a part—and it worked!

I like to think that there is a certain special "something" about people who have theatre training—a certain spring in the walk, a certain light in the eye. Let us say they have a "flair for living." You have that. You know how to get the most out of everything. And even if you never do anything spectacular with your own personal life, you live a wider, fuller existence because of your experience in interpreting the characters in plays. You may never have left your home town, but still you were at King Arthur's Court with *The Connecticut Yankee*; you traveled to Tibet in *Lost Horizon*; you learned to appreciate the drama and beauty of everyday life in *Our Town*.

"Never did a thing with your high school dramatics?" Why, it has become a part of you. You're using it every day of your life!



## PUPPETRY

(Continued from page 10)

expensive to produce. It costs less, for example, than a motion picture of equal length. Further, the marionette is not mechanized, as the movies are, and not so common as the movies . . . it compels attention and it can be as simple or as elaborate as the advertiser desires." These very reasons probably account for the fact that many puppets appearing on today's television programs do quite a bit of direct selling in addition to providing entertainment.

The appeal of puppets — whether used commercially or otherwise — is a universal one. They provide a unique form of entertainment and young and old alike respond to them. Because their appeal is not limited to any age group — nor to any one type of person, their popularity has continued — and continues now — to grow. And there is enjoyment to be had not only in being entertained by puppets but also in working with them. This means that opportunities in puppetry are many — and will continue to be so.

Although in other parts of the world puppetry has flourished for centuries, it is comparatively new in this country. When my own company, the Tatterman Marionettes, was organized in 1923, it was among the first of the professional groups to be seen throughout the United States. It is literally true that, as I wrote in my opening paragraph, in those days there were many sponsors who did not know what a puppet, or a marionette, was — and we really did carry one with us when booking programs! Now, however, we need no longer worry about embarrassing a sponsor, for today practically everyone knows what a marionette show is. In a great many high schools, for example, puppetry has entered the classroom. Art classes derive satisfaction in the creation of interesting puppets, writing classes enjoy preparing scripts for their use, dramatic students find in the presentation of puppet plays a stimulating and "different" type of theatre experience — and one, incidentally, which provides excellent dramatic training in voice projection and flexibility, in diction, and in timing. I have seen high school puppet plays which rival professional ones in the excellence of their presentation.

That the growth of puppetry in this country and its continuing popularity are very widespread is attested to in the great increase of membership in the national organization known as the Puppeteers of America. Organized in 1937, membership in this group is now well over 700 and includes a sizeable number of junior members as well as adults. It is made up of professional puppeteers, teachers, students, television artists, therapists, recreation workers, business people and other hobbyists, artists, Scout troops, Y groups, school clubs and classes and other individuals

and organizations. Membership in the Puppeteers of America is open to anyone who is interested in puppetry. Included with membership is the bi-monthly magazine published by the organization, the Puppetry Journal. Many school and public libraries are subscribers to this interesting magazine.

The Puppeteers of America is affiliated with the American Educational Theatre Association and has representation on the council of that organization. Each year a national Festival of the Puppeteers of America is held — four days and evenings of demonstrations, discussions on all phases of puppetry, an exhibit of puppets from all over the world and performances by amateurs and leading professionals of this country and others. Following this four-day Festival is the Puppetry Institute of the Puppeteers of America, an eight-day concentrated workshop course in puppetry with a faculty of outstanding professional puppeteers. Many teachers and students are among those taking advantage of this opportunity to study puppetry under experts in puppet-making, manipulation and production. Academic recognition has been given for the work of this national Puppetry Institute — those who qualify have received college credit or certification for the course.

That there are many opportunities in puppetry is evident — in the use of puppets in the advertising field, in entertainment and educational institutions. Puppetry provides a most stimulating activity and certainly an entertaining hobby for all who wish to enter into this field.

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## MIME

(Continued from page 9)

use of his body. His body, including his face and hands, must express not himself but his role. Every movement and expression must be dramatically meaningful, i.e., artistic or artificial. The actor therefore besides working on diction must work on mime. In fact, the practice of mime will improve his speaking, since both are forms of rhythmic movement.

Mime and pantomime are terms often confused both now and in the past. The great exponents of mime in France and England in the last hundred years have done much to clarify the words for us. *Mime* is the term for both the actor and the play of which he is an interpreter. The mime play is often integrated with music, ballet-wise—and is of a more serious nature than *pantomime* and calls for more specialized skill in the use of gesture than the generalized movements of pantomime, which is comedic. It is not, perhaps, too much of a simplification to suggest that mime is to pantomime what standard speech is to colloquial.

Mime gesture is of four main kinds: speech (in mime plays only), occupational, characteristic and natural emotional. The hands, for example, are organs of silent speech, the machinery of occupation, an indication of character and the means of expressing emotion. H. D. C. Pepler, author of *Mimes, Sacred and Profane* (St. Dominic's Press, Sussex, England), divides action into natural and formal, the latter being an end in itself and the former a means to an end. He gives as one example the following. A man removes his hat because he is hot—natural action. A man raises his hat to greet a lady—formal action. This formal action, Pepler maintains, is mime.

The mime actor's hands and face are his most expressive aids, but all mime is valueless unless it emanates from within—from the mind and feelings. Drill on standardized facial expressions and hand movements of fear, joy, surprise, etc., do more harm than good. Drill of the different parts of the body, however, to make them more flexible and consequently more expressive, is invaluable. The actor needs to limber up as the athlete does, though the exercises and the goals differ.

This limbering up should be done, if possible, to music. Strongly marked rhythms (waltz, march, minuet, for example) are helpful. The limbering up should be followed by simple exercises in mime, at first without music, in which the actor slowly and *accurately* "mimes" familiar daily actions—without any actual "props." Good examples of such actions are putting on and taking off shoes, overcoats and gloves, setting places at a table, etc. The actor must be clearly aware of the weight, shape,

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texture and size of the articles he is miming so that every detail is as clear to the observer as if the "props" used were actually present. Actors usually benefit by working at first as a group rather than individually to lessen self-consciousness (with its attendant tension and awkwardness). The director, and later the actor's fellows, must watch that every detail is clearly visible and understandable. Gradually the pace of the mime can be increased to a more normal one for the action, the character and the mood conceived. Next, the actor should practice more involved actions such as sewing on a button, washing hands, nailing a floor board into place, washing a cup and saucer, pouring and drinking a cup of coffee or other liquid. Here again, the objects must be visualized with absolute clarity by the actor if they are to be made visible to the onlooker. The shape, color, weight, size, feel, taste, or place must be fully perceived by the actor; then they will be equally created for the audience. Too often an action is only roughly "pantomimed" in rehearsal, without clear analysis of the varied actions involved, so that when the actor is confronted by the actual objects at dress rehearsal, he is disconcerted by them—his words get lost in such actions as chewing, drinking and swallowing, none of which has he really rehearsed in mime, only in rough gesticulation.

Having practiced such exercises as part of a group and then individually, the actor should then repeat these actions in character, in differing moods or periods such as that of an Elizabethan, a Colonial lady or gentleman, as a Victorian, a nervous old man or woman and as a day-dreaming boy or girl. Exercises that involve special movement should follow. The actors can walk on different kinds of terrain with different reasons in mind and in varying moods. If the terrain and the sights which meet the eye are really felt and seen by the actors, they will be readily conveyed to the audience. Similarly the reactions physical, mental, and emotional of the rest of the group, can and must be equally vividly expressed.

Up till now, the mime exercises suggested aid the individual actor in the use and expressiveness of his body. However, the practice of mime should

not stop here. Reaction on stage is as important as action; consequently mime must be used as group acting.

Irene Mawer, author of the *Art of Mime* (Methuen & Co., London), stresses the value of mime because it necessitates close interplay among the cast as a whole. "Each movement in a mime play," she states, "is the result of the action of another, and in its turn re-acts on yet another player." Consequently, every mime (actor) learns to re-act in character to every change of thought and feeling expressed by the other players on the stage with him. Since mime is thought expressed by movement, the mime actor strives to simplify, broaden and make more precise every thought and feeling he mimes. Mime plays can grow from the practice of familiar scenes and from the dramatization of ballads, myths and folk tales. The main action should be first roughed out and its sequence learnt. Then the "play" is rehearsed for attention to detail, characterization, group motivation and teamwork. Thus the play grows to a clear-cut structure from opening to climax. Background or integrated music can be added; in fact the practice of mime with music aids precision and makes the actors more consciously rhythmic and improves their sense of timing.

Specialized types, such as the Harlequinade characters and the sharply delineated Colonial dandies or Victorian ladies and gentlemen, are good practice for the mime-player whose actions in everyday life are diametrically different and therefore afford him more advanced problems in interpretation without cartooned mimicry.

When a period play is chosen for production, the whole cast should learn early in rehearsal how to dress in the clothes of the period, putting on their garments in mime, working mimetically with the accessories of their period role—fan, snuffbox, cane, sword, reticule, poignard, just as precisely as they learn to mime a stage duel or fight, a love scene or a dinner party—slowly at first and in detail. By the time the actual costumes, accessories and properties are added, the actors are as much at home in them as in their every-day clothes. Furthermore, they have learnt the intricacies of the bow and curtsy, the salute or salaam, as if to the manner born. The words uttered are now matched by the actions, indeed are fused together to make an artistic whole, instead of being, as is all too frequently the case, on terms of distant and often awkward acquaintanceship.

A careful study of the *mime* play that precedes the spoken drama of *The Murder of Gonzago* in *Hamlet*, coupled with the often quoted advice given by the Prince to the Players, reveals that Shakespeare and his fellow actors knew and prized the skills of miming that we have all but forgotten today.

## GIRLS

(Continued from page 8)

reached senior proportions we know them fairly well, but we are not infallible, and one of the most certain phases of show business, even on the modest amateur level, is the uncertainty of the whole thing. Quiet, unassuming girls, the acme of femininity, have a way sometimes of walking off with the leading male role; and a husky-voiced senior for whom a hero's part seems a sure thing will often give a grand dowager performance. We don't even try to line up a cast of characters until the last girl has turned in a trial performance.

There are certain handicaps encountered when girls take on the masculine parts. For instance, just this year in *Double Door* there was the problem of carrying the heroine from the vault and depositing her on the couch. One cast had no trouble; the "hero" managed the job nicely. It looked for a while as though our other heroine would have



The cast and the script girl for *Lost Victory*, presented by The Curtain Time Club, Pittsburg, Texas, Thespian Troupe 1129, Janet Hargrove, Sponsor.

to come out under her own power, however. Finally, the cast's aging lawyer brought out the heroine. I'm still not certain as to what we would have done had none of the "men" been up to the task.

The policy of giving masculine parts to girls may not appeal to everyone. Some may think it impossible for the girls to be properly convincing. Personally, I believe a good actress in a masculine role can create the illusion of masculinity in spite of the obvious physical handicaps. And isn't it the function of the drama to create illusion?

An audience will become absorbed in the play and the acting when both are good. The original choir boy Juliet with his soprano voice and unbearded cheek probably did a fine job of impersonating the lovely Capulet, but when his voice changed to an uncertain baritone, I don't imagine anyone was too surprised; certainly, it's hardly likely that any disillusioned groundling muttered disappointedly, "Methought the lad was a lass all the time!" Complete transformation isn't possible nor necessary.

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# BRIEF VIEWS

By TALBOT PEARSON

## BAKER'S PLAYS Boston, Mass.

*Radio, Plays from History and Literature* by Walter Hackett. This little booklet (it contains only seven short playlets) should be greeted with joy by all teachers who have secured air time and want to present something which will ensure a listening audience. All the scripts have had professional network production, and have been proven as to timing and effectiveness. There are four thirty-minute and three fifteen-minute adaptations of famous stories prepared with skill and expert knowledge of the medium. Inevitably, *Jane Eyre* is one of the longer scripts, as is *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Among the shorter ones is an amusing item from Thomas Bailey Aldrich's works, called *Marjorie Daw*. All seven should be excellent for practice, and while air presentation is protected by the publishers, there is reason to believe permission will not be difficult to obtain for high school broadcasters. The only flaw in the publication is the listing of these playlets as "30 minutes" and "15 minutes." Everyone who has produced on radio knows that after allowance for spot commercials (singing or otherwise), station announcements, identification, names of performers and a "plug" for next week's program, a 30-minute program boils down to around 27 of those precious units of time. This department, conscientious for the welfare of its readers, timed two of the short pieces in the collection, and they both ran no longer than 13 minutes, which is as it should be. So, producers, go easy on those music-bridges. Keep them short.

*Sing Christmas* by Margaret Douglas Chamberlin; play in nine scenes; 21 m., 10 f., extras.

This appears to be a new departure in Christmas plays, involving what might seem like flashbacks but which are actually imaginative incidents conjured up by the high school students who sustain the main plot. The stories of the Christmas festival in Italy, England and Austria are cleverly interpolated and don't appear to be too exacting of the players' skills. The only weakness in the writing is the author's affection for pseudo-mediaeval dialogue and "strange oaths." A feeling of antiquity may be created without resort to "sdeath!" and "Gadzooks." And liberties with word-order designed, no doubt, to give period flavor can only be classified as affectation, besides giving trouble to the players. The actual effect on the audience, as on the reader, may only be one of irritation. But there are acting opportunities and the changes of scene should be simple enough to make worthwhile the production of a rather touching little story.

## DRAMATISTS' PLAY SERVICE, INC. New York City

*Flight into Egypt*, a play in three acts by George Tabori; 16 m., 2 f.; interior of Glubb's Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, one day in 1949. Although the possibilities of this play's production by any but a most unusual high school cast are of the slightest, this column takes the opportunity to recommend a reading of the script. It is worthwhile to be reminded of the countless millions of unhappy refugees to whom America is neither a paradise of juke-boxes, frappes and TV sets, nor an effete country where socialism (New Deal style) has stifled enterprise. To the escapee from tyranny and oppression, whether at the hands of Hitler or Stalin or any of their pale but yet deadly imitators or successors, America is a glorious horizon of freedom and security. It is well

to refresh our own perspective through the lenses of a European observer.

The story of the play concerns the struggle of an invalid Viennese to obtain a visa in order to ship to America with his wife and nine-year-old son. There are difficulties. Franz Engel, crippled by torture, is not a "desirable new American," money is scarce, officials are mercenary and regulations place further obstacles. The spirit of the refugee is almost crushed, but an inherent nobility shows him the way out in his search for love and security. The play combines the fantastic and the familiar. It is poetic rather than naturalistic. Produce it if possible, but by all means, read it.

*The Lady's Not for Burning*, a comedy in verse in 3 acts, by Christopher Fry; 8 m., 3 f.; a room in the house of the mayor of a small English town in the 15th century. It has been widely claimed for Mr. Fry that he has rediscovered the value of poetry in the theatre. While there are yet few signs of a trend, his own work is effective, and most refreshing after the constricted vocabularies and telegraphic style of the average modern playwright.

In case the title is not sufficiently revealing, we may explain that the play centers around a 15th century witch-hunt, the intended victim being young, charming and intelligent. As she is no more witch than she is hag, there is more than one man ready to keep her company.

The humor is rich and at times, earthy, but it has the cleanliness of good soil, not the foulness of slime. The characters are all full-blooded and full-bodied. Mr. Fry makes no use of meretricious "mediaeval" locations: admirers of the De Mille type of "Robin Hood" dialogue will be disappointed. There is not a "Gadzook" nor an "unhand me, varlet" in the whole play. But there is magic in the skillful arrangement of the examples from our modern vocabulary. And color too and excitement. It is too much to hope that there will be many schools containing students with the flexible voices necessary to let these lines run off the tongue, for run they must. This is comedy, not melodrama. Even though production possibilities be slight, teachers will enjoy reading this play and picturing it in the perspective of their stage. And what new horizons in vocabulary, in the landscape of words, it opens up to the perceptive, student and teacher alike!

*Thor, with Angels*, a play in one act and *A Phoenix too Frequent*, a comedy in one act by the same author. Both these short pieces have been produced in Mr. Fry's native England, the second of them with marked success. Neither has possibilities for high school production, but should be read as preliminary

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sketches for the larger plays. In both is the author's gift for poetic expression, relieved by impish humor, equally apparent and effective.

## DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY Chicago, Ill.

*Spring Night*, a play in three acts, dramatized by Anne Coulter Martens from the story *Prelude* by Lucile Vaughan Payne; 6 m., 10 f., extras; a high school music room, a corner of Nancy's dressing room and a corner of the Sweet Treat Shop. This reviewer, harkening to the more vocal teachers of dramatics who yearly plead for "plays in one set," has been over-cautious in recommending scripts which call for changes of scene. But recent reading of the pages of *DRAMATICS* has shown many courageous (and apparently successful) productions of plays which would put a New York producer, having to meet a stage-crew's payroll every Saturday, on relief. Since high school crews are not yet unionized, and since enterprise seems to be still in currency, a revision of policy may be in order. This column forswears further timidity, and in celebration of the change of heart, offers this charming little item as evidence. Actually *Spring Night* is no more than a one-set show, the main locale being the school music room, with the two others (dressing room and shop) being mere insets.

Nancy is an unaffected girl of seventeen, quite deeply in love with music, so it is not surprising that her physical affections center on a boy who is more than usually talented as a pianist. But he is poor, his background is European (his father, a refugee from Hungary) and even Nancy's own mother exerts obvious pressure to induce an attachment to a more "regular," conventional boy friend. There is ample good, intelligent humor, superior dialogue and the right amount of suspense. And, a happy ending. It's a very welcome relief from the plethora of teen-age plays glorifying bad manners in the guise of innocent high spirits. The Misses Payne and Martens present youngsters who do really attend a good high school.

*State Fair*, dramatized by Luella McMahon and Christopher Sergel, from the book by Phil Stong; comedy in three acts; 6 m., 5 f.; just outside the Frake family's tent in Tentville at the Iowa State Fair. A lot of the red corpses in the original book, published in 1932, were removed in the making of the movie of the same name some years ago. Yet this department recalls the appealing performance of Jeanne Crain in the role of Margy. The names of the other contributors have faded and memory will not bring back even the musical numbers, charming though they were. So it was with eager anticipation that I re-read in this McMahon-Sergel version the story of young love, livestock, pickles and prizes at a midwestern state fair. How the Frake family exhibited their products, including Blue Boy, the champion hog of all time (who doesn't appear in this version of the story), how their son found the "only girl" and their daughter nearly lost her happiness because of college-boy competition — all these are in the play.

This play has, even to one who remembers both novel and movie, a powerful charm and a great basic truth. The few middle-aged-to-elderly characters should not give trouble in casting and the use of a number of extra players is quite right and proper. They will add flavor and color and help to project the feeling of a busy rendezvous of farmers at the fair. This play will prove a delight both to the cast and to the audience.

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